

The Seven Last Things of Prophecy.





The Voice of Inspiration
ON THE
Seven Last Things of Prophecy;

OR, WHAT SAITH THE SCRIPTURES ON

*The Coming of the Lord—The First Resurrection—The
Millennial Glory—Satan's "Little Season"—The
Resurrection of the Dead—The Judgment—
The Final State.*

LECTURES BY

REV. JOSEPH WILKINS,

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"HE THAT HATH AN EAR, LET HIM HEAR WHAT THE SPIRIT SAITH
UNTO THE CHURCHES.")



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P R E F A C E.



JUSTICE demands a line or two of preface.

The author felt a necessity laid upon him to lift up a scriptural standard against the extraordinary vagaries which pre-millennarians are so zealous in circulating; and, if possible, to hinder in some degree their pernicious effects. Hence these Lectures; which were given in the ordinary course of the ministry of the Word, and were commenced without the least intention of their being re-produced; but, at the earnest request of many Christian friends who heard them, and of others who read reports of them in the local papers, they are now printed from the original manuscripts, with little alterations beyond some verbal corrections.

The reader will find here no great pretensions to novelty, or originality of thought; much of the reasoning by which the views here enunciated are sustained may be found in the works of worthy authors who have gone over the ground before, and to these authors a respectful acknowledgment is here made of the help which has been received from them.

The popular form in which productions of this kind must of necessity be given, will preclude the expecta-

tion of anything like the protracted and exhaustive arguments of a large treatise. Any one who wishes to become acquainted with such arguments, will find them in the excellent works of Dr. Brown on "The Second Advent," "Short arguments on the Millennium," by the Rev. B. C. Young, and in the "Bampton Lectures" for 1854; and much that is valuable in the history of the controversy may be found in the "End of all things," by James Grant, and in the introduction to "Thoughts on the Apocalypse," by Rev. John Mills. To have attempted anything like an exhaustive investigation would have rendered these lectures too tedious for the majority of the hearers who listened to them.

The author is glad to have the opportunity—as this Preface is going to press—of expressing his pleasure on hearing the Rev. Dr. Thomas, the Chairman of the Baptist Union for the present year, in his opening address call attention to the unscriptural dogmas of pre-millennialism, and sincerely trusts that it may help to awaken the concern of the thoughtful to the evils with which they are fraught.

With fervent prayer that the divine blessing may attend these few and imperfect pages, they are now sent forth with the earnest desire that they may be made conducive in some humble degree to the vindication of truth, and thereby to the advancement of the Redeemer's kingdom and glory.

Queen Square, Brighton,
May, 1872.



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ERRATA.

Page 20, 11th line from top, read "respecting," for "representing."

„ 32, 3rd line from top, read "who had," for "who has."

„ 44, 15th line from bottom, read "have," for "has."

„ 91, 13th line from top, omit "by."

„ 96, 1st line, read "accounted worthy."

„ 102, 12th line from top, read "life" for "live."

„ 141, 14th and 19th lines from bottom, omit parenthetical signs.



LECTURE I.

“THE COMING OF THE LORD.”

Delivered on Sunday Evening, Dec. 17, 1871.

“For the Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father with His angels ; and then He shall reward every man according to his works.

Verily I say unto you, There be some standing here, which shall not taste of death, till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom.”

Matt. xvi. 27, 28.

IT is well known to all persons who are acquainted with the religious world, that the Second Advent of our Lord has claimed considerable, and, I may add, increasing attention, during the past few years ; and that a variety of doctrines of the most novel and extraordinary character have been advocated in connection therewith, whilst the widest diversity of opinion that could possibly be imagined still exists upon this subject among the people of God. Hence it becomes the duty of every Christian to study carefully the word of truth that he may know the mind of the Spirit upon the points in question, and thereby be guided in his aspirations and service in the Kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ ; especially as this controversy is constantly cropping up in lectures, sermons, and in private conversation, on every hand, and the simple and unwary are easily caught in the meshes of sad

delusion, from which many of them never get released. With a view of leading your minds to this study, and of trying to guide you in your conclusions therein, I enter upon the Course of Lectures I have announced.

I have no doubt but some of my hearers will think it very undesirable to devote these precious Sabbath evenings to such a study of controversy; but let them not forget that the subjects we are about to discuss are of the most sacred character, and of the deepest moment, and are such as Paul, and the rest of the Apostles, were ever ready to argue, and fearlessly to defend. Besides, it is not my intention to fill up these sacred hours with bare controversy, but I rather hope to make these seasons special occasions for presenting the solemnities of the Gospel, and the claims of the Lord Jesus, to every man who hears me; and let it be remembered, that if *we* are silent upon these questions, *those* who hold views directly opposed to the New Testament are not silent, but are constantly sowing seeds, which are yielding the most prolific and painful harvest. As I conscientiously believe that pre-millennialism is a dangerous delusion, I am bound, as a minister of Christ, to set forth the truth in opposition thereto, which I conceive to be a sufficient apology for the work I have undertaken. It will be readily admitted that some truths are more important than others, as some are vital and saving, whilst, in point of salvation, some are non-essential. Still, all truth is precious, and that Christian is not "thoroughly furnished" who neglects any part of it. I hold, however, that the present question is not simply whether these doctrines are essential or non-essential, but rather, what is the effect of these pre-millennial novelties upon the Church of God. Every one who has been initiated into the subtleties of this controversy knows well that an entirely new method of interpretation of Scripture is involved therein, and an utter abandonment of the hope inspired by the great commission and promise of Christ. The word of God and the honor of our Divine Lord both demand, that, by the preaching of the Gospel, the

earth shall be filled with the knowledge of truth and righteousness, so that thereby all the world may see the salvation of our God. But pre-millenarians repudiate this gracious design, and tell us that the Gospel has done all, or nearly all, it can do,¹ and that "the Church forgets her own calling" when "she proposes indeed to convert the world."² Any system of exposition which demands such fearful and God dishonouring sentiments as these, deserves to be classed with the most advanced infidelity, and ought to be repudiated by every mind that has ever heard of the love of Jesus, and of the triumphs of the Cross.

I have no doubt but that in attempting to expose the unsoundness of these views I shall lay myself open to the charge of *ignorance*, which is usually brought against post-millenarians. There can be no question but that a great amount of ignorance still prevails among professing Christians upon bible truth in general, and, perhaps, specially upon the subjects before us ; but that a refusal to receive the dogmas of pre-millenarians is any sign of ignorance I utterly deny ; and to use this charge, as is often done, as a weapon against us, is an assumption on the part of our opponents, which neither gives dignity to the men who make it, nor support to the cause they have espoused, as it is quite as weak in argument on one side as on the other. Whether there be anything in the system we are about to review to entitle its advocates to any special claim to intellectual greatness, we shall probably be better able to judge at the conclusion of our labours. I simply make the allusion to the assumption I have mentioned, to intimate that I am fully prepared for anything in this direction.

I am also fully aware that the task I have assigned to myself has nothing of the sensational, nor of novelty in it, as I have nothing new to bring to excite the credulous, nor to draw upon the unbridled imagination of visionary minds. Indeed, we do not desire any new thing ; for if we can receive the truth taught by Scripture,—the truth upon which the Church of

God has lived, and by which it has been stimulated these eighteen hundred years, we shall find no *need* of, as we shall find no *room* for, the vain notions of our fellow-men.

In speaking of some of the sentiments I have to combat as "novel," I do not wish to convey the idea that pre-millennialism is a new thing. From the days of Papias, who flourished at the end of the first and the beginning of the second centuries, there have been a few here and there who have believed in the "personal reign" of Christ on the earth, but the belief has often been connected with intellectual weakness and fanaticism, and, till within modern times, has never embraced a large portion of the vagaries now maintained. Therefore, though some features of these views are old, we are perfectly justified in representing much which surround them as the novel inventions of modern years.

Perhaps, in this introduction, I ought to make a remark or two upon the meaning of certain words which are frequently used in this controversy; and I do this the more freely, as I have found several persons during the past few days, who, though they perfectly understood the prefixes *pre* and *post*, did not know to what they specially alluded. "Millennium," as most persons know, means a thousand years, and in theology is applied to that period mentioned in the twentieth chapter of Revelation, when Satan is to be bound, and righteousness to prevail in the earth. Any person, then, who believes in that thousand years, is a millenarian, whatever may be his views concerning the method by which its happiness shall be secured. It becomes necessary, therefore, to use some other definition to distinguish the two classes of Christians who are divided upon this subject, and, as the great question upon which they divide is whether the Lord will come personally BEFORE the millennium or AFTER it, these two prefixes are all that are required to mark the distinction. A pre-millenarian, then, is one who believes that Christ will come bodily, or personally, before the thousand years, and will indeed so reign

throughout that period ; whilst a post-millenarian believes that Christ will not come personally till after those days of righteousness, which he believes will be brought about by the spiritual reign of Christ,—that is, by the present dispensation of preaching and gospel ordinances. It is not uncommon to speak of *pre-millenarians* as “millenarians” simply, and *post-millenarians* as “*anti-millenarians* ; but this is not just, as the latter, as strongly as the former, believe in the thousand years.

I shall earnestly endeavour in these Lectures to speak the truth in love, though I speak frankly and decidedly, as I feel strongly ; and if any one differs from me, whilst I shall be sorry that he is entangled in the opposite theories, I shall freely allow him the same privilege that I claim for myself,—that is, to believe what he conscientiously thinks before God and men.

THE TOPIC FOR THIS FIRST LECTURE IS

“THE COMING OF THE LORD.”

And what a wonderful thought does this unfold to us for contemplation. Surely nothing could exceed it in grandeur and importance ; whether we consider the majesty of the Lord Himself, or the objects He has in view in visiting us. When we remember how the inhabitants of the earth have generally despised and rejected the Most High, we see sufficient reason for His coming to judgment ; but that any other idea than vengeance could be connected with His visits to men is indeed a wonder of wonders ; and yet the brightest hopes of tens of thousands of Adam’s sons and daughters have, for many generations, been gathering around “the coming of the Lord.”

This fact applies to both dispensations—to that of the Old Testament, and to this of the New ; for it is the burden of each, though differing widely in its character, according to the promises of grace upon which these aspirations have been based. It is deeply interesting to observe that this one thought, “the

coming of the Lord," has always been held up to the eye of faith by the hand of a loving and gracious God. No sooner was the curse let in by man's disobedience than the great Jehovah promised the Strong Deliverer, who should come and roll back the curse, and bruise the Usurper's head; and this one divine hope was never allowed to die out until it was accomplished by the Incarnate Saviour. There were seasons of darkness and, humanly speaking, seasons of despair; but, amid the deepest gloom, the finger of promise pointed to the Morning Star. How beautifully this was seen in connection with the captivity in Babylon. The ten tribes of Israel had been completely swept away, and for about one hundred and forty years had been scattered as chaff before the wind, and now Nebuchadnezzar comes to clear the Land of Promise of the remaining two tribes of the Holy Seed. For hundreds of years, yea, for more than a thousand years, the Great Promise had been deposited with Abraham and his heirs, and had been limited to Isaac, to Jacob, and then to Judah; and for more than three hundred years it had been further limited to the house of David. But now all is dark, and apparently hopeless; the last of David's representatives on the throne is driven from his palace and city, and dragged to Riblah, where, after seeing his children slain, his own eyes are put out, and he is sent a blind vassal to Babylon, and his city is destroyed, and all his people are captives and slaves. Was it any wonder that, at such a time, the old enemy should triumph, and prompt his emissaries to taunt the children of Judah with the sceptical question—"Where is your God?" or, "Where is the promise of His coming?" Nor was it to be wondered at that the poor captives should hang their harps upon the willows, and weep in bitterness as they remembered Zion. But had the Lord forgotten His promise? and would He be gracious no more? Far be it from Him. For more than a hundred years before the trial came He had directed Isaiah to prepare the sweetest words of comfort, and to assure the people, that walked in darkness and the shadow of death, that they should

yet see a great Light. For though they were grievously afflicted, the Child of Promise should yet be born, and the Son of Consolation be yet given, whose *Name should be called the Wonderful, the Counsellor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace; and whose Government upon the Throne of David should be one of righteousness and peace which should never end.* Could anything be more assuring and confirming than this promise amid the tears and reproaches of that cruel bondage? Surely nothing; though its fulfilment was yet *five hundred* years distant. But the fulness of time was at length completed, and the Lord came to His temple, and the long promised redemption was accomplished; and devils and men united in their testimony that He was the Son of God.

But again He is about to withdraw, and the very announcement of His departure fills His disciples with woe, some of whom even say one to another, "Let us go and die with Him;" as though the world would be but a hopeless chaos if He were gone. Yet once more how assuring is the promise, "The Son of man shall come again, and He will receive you to Himself." Yea, He will come in His kingdom, He will come and even dwell with the disciple that loves Him; yea, still more, He will come and punish this nation, and at length will finally come to judgment amid the glory of His Father and His holy angels. What wonderful words are these! words upon which the eye of faith should ever look, and upon which the heart of the believer should ever rest; and, indeed, are the words upon which the Church has lived, more or less, from that day till this. So that, like that of the old testament Church, our hope is in the coming of the Lord; and thus, from Adam till now, the watch-word of faith has been, "The Lord shall come, and blessed are all they that wait for Him."

So far, few, if any, pre-millenarians would demur to my statements. It is only when we come to analyse the words and meaning of our Lord that we begin to diverge.

I have selected this text, made up of two consecutive verses, to show that we have to be careful not to confound scripture by making it bend to one line of interpretation. How do you suppose our modern teachers would have explained these two verses had they have been in Judea after our Lord's Ascension? I have no hesitation in believing that they would have assured their hearers *that the Lord would come in the glory of His Father and of His holy angels; before all of the men then living would be called away*. For in both verses the "Son of man" is promised *to come*; and in the latter, He is promised to come during the *life-time* of some of the Lord's audience. Yet, supposing this line of argument to have been adopted, could anything have been more unsafe or unsound? As a fact, we know that the Lord *has not* yet come according to the twenty-seventh verse; and, as a fact, we equally know that He *has come* according to the twenty-eighth verse, for all who heard Jesus speak have been in their graves for at least seventeen-hundred years. What, then, are we to understand by the "Coming of the Son of man"? I shall presume that no one will doubt that the Lord Jesus is alike meant in both verses by "THE SON OF MAN." Taking that for granted, I answer: *These two comings are as diverse the one from the other as any two events can possibly be*; and not only so, but you have to follow two different lines of interpretation to make anything of them. The first—the twenty-seventh verse—is to be understood literally,—The Lord's coming in person. The second—twenty-eighth verse—is to be understood figuratively,—The Lord's coming in some way during the first century of the Christian era. Now if this be so, then we have here a key to unlock many mysteries about the use of this sentence, "*The coming of the Lord*." And I may safely assert, that no one can disturb the proposition I have here laid down concerning this two-fold passage of God's Word.

With the light of this double meaning, it remains for us now to try and read the book of God so as to guide our hopes and expectations concerning the Lord's

promises, whether they relate to our present life, or future glory.

Let me observe—

I.—*That there is hanging over this dispensation, as there was over the past, a glorious promise of the personal coming of the Lord and Saviour.* From Eden to Bethlehem the promise of the Lord's coming was the glory of the prophets, and the beauty of the sacrifices ; as it was also the joy of Patriarchs, Priests, and Kings, who by faith saw His day and were glad. Yet in many respects how uncertain and indefinite did that promise appear. *Sometimes* His coming was described as that of a Priest, *sometimes* as that of a King. *Here* He is set forth as a reigning Lord, *there* as a suffering man. *This prophet* says, "He is the desire of the nations." *That one* says, "He shall grow up as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground in which there is no comeliness." In *this passage* He cries out, "My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken me?" In *another*, He exclaims, "*The Spirit of the Lord God is upon me, because the Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings to the meek, to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim liberty to the captive, and the opening of the prison to them that are bound.*" Now with all these apparently contradictory descriptions it was no wonder if some of the Old Testament saints exclaimed, like the Eunuch, "Of whom spake the prophets these things?" Yet though they were then very difficult to be understood, it is now clear that they related to the first coming of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. And *since* His coming, all are easily explained.

So also from Bethany, where Jesus parted with His disciples, to the last great day, we have the promise of a personal coming graciously hanging over us ; and here, as in the former case, there may be much that is hard, and difficult ; yet even where we cannot unravel the mystery, we can firmly believe in the promise that "*He shall come the second time without sin unto salvation,*" and then, what appeared difficult before will be made as plain as were the apparent contradictions in His first coming.

Now these two comings of our Lord are set forth as the *first* and *second* coming, and both are *personal*, and there is never a *third* coming mentioned, as the appearing of the great God and our Saviour. Personally, then, the world had the promise of two advents of the Lord, and the fulfilment of the first is a sure pledge of the fulfilment of the second. Did any sceptical Jew say, "*How can a Virgin bear a Son?*" the only answer would have been "The day shall declare it." Did another doubter enquire, "*How can a child be the Mighty God?*" the same answer would have sufficed. And now, as we see how all these mysteries were made plain, can we doubt the truth of His promise, "*The Son of man shall come in the glory of His Father and with His angels*"? The mystery was greater for God to be manifested in the flesh, than it will be for the Man Christ Jesus to be manifested in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. The last time when He came it was Deity veiled, and men scorned Him; the next time it will be Humanity glorified, and before Him the scoffers shall tremble, and the sceptic shall quail. The first time when Christ came, He came the Man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, bearing our infirmities, and being wounded for our transgressions, and, by the Divine Father, was made an offering for sin. The second time when He comes, He will come without a sin-offering, to perfect the complete salvation of God's whole elect. Do you look back with faith on what He was, and what He did? *Then* you may look forward with joy to what He will *be*, and what He will *do* at the day of His coming. Do you treat His first visit with contempt and discredit? You will not so treat His second. Judas, and Herod, and Pilate, and the Counsel of the Jews, all played false when last He was here; but none of them will play false when He comes with His Father's glory and His holy angels. Does the Church go back to the Cross for the open fountain to cleanse from sin and uncleanness? She also looks forward to the glory-cloud and the heavenly throng for the con-

summation of her hope and the fulness of her bliss. Did Abraham, one thousand eight hundred and seventy years before the Incarnation, look with joyful eyes to Immanuel's day? We, with tenfold more delight, can look forward to His second day, when by all the redeemed He shall be welcomed and adored, no longer as the despised Nazarene, but as the "Judge of quick and dead," and as the glorious Redeemer of His Body the Church. Are any ashamed of Him now, whilst His Name is every day blasphemed, and His Kingdom is slow in its triumphs, and often paralyzed in its progress? Of such He will be ashamed, when, before His Father, He will confess the names of His faithful and loving disciples !

Let it not be supposed that *post*-millenarians are cold and indifferent about our Lord's coming, or that our *knowledge* that we shall *not* remain in the body to see it diminishes our interest therein. Was Abraham disinterested in the Seed in which the world should be blessed because he knew that he should not live on the earth to behold It? Was David cold and indifferent about the coming of Him who was to be his Son and Lord because a thousand years were lying between him and that event? Far from it. Though he knew he was going to the grave without the sight, yet by faith he leaped over all the intervening distance, and with glowing fervour he addresses Him as though He were near. Listen to his adoring language.—"THOU ART FAIRER THAN THE CHILDREN OF MEN ; GRACE IS POURED INTO THY LIPS : THEREFORE GOD HATH BLESSED THEE FOR EVER. GIRD THY SWORD UPON THY THIGH, O MOST MIGHTY, WITH THY GLORY AND THY MAJESTY. AND IN THY MAJESTY RIDE PROSPEROUSLY, BECAUSE OF TRUTH AND MEEKNESS AND RIGHTEOUSNESS ; AND THY RIGHT HAND SHALL TEACH THEE TERRIBLE THINGS." These fervid words were not the utterance of an unintelligible inspiration ; but they were words that came boiling from the *heart* of David, and yet he knew he should never live to see the Christ-king of whom he spake. Now, mark you, that was a thousand years before the Saviour came. We, to-day, are at

least a thousand years before He will come the second time, and yet, with the same ardour and glow of heart as David felt, we can leap over the distance and sing—

“Put Thy bright robes of triumph on,
And bless our eyes, and bless our ears;
Thou absent love, Thou dear unknown,
Thou fairest of ten thousand fairs.

Hark! how Thy saints unite their cries,
And pray, and wait the general doom;
Come Thou, the soul of all our joys!
Thou, the desire of nations, come!”

Should any person suppose that this language is inconsistent with our views of a post-millennial advent, we reply, the author did not think so, for he was a post-millenarian, nor are these words more unnatural than were those of David a thousand years before the Incarnation. Was Isaiah cold or indifferent when he called upon the people thus,—“Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee?” or when he said, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of Him that bringeth good tidings, that publisheth peace, that bringeth good tidings of good, that publisheth salvation, that saith unto Zion, Thy God reigneth?” Was not the Prophet, in his heart of hearts, realizing the thing as near, though he knew from other prophecies he had uttered that long distances lay between him and the time when these things should be? and if he could feel all that inspiring joy seven hundred years before the event, may not we feel a like joy, though hundreds of years may yet pass before our anticipations are realized? The fact is, we look down the future ages as upon a beautiful landscape, in which is seen the rising ground, the hillock, and the mountain heights, the highest peak of which is the farthest off; yet that is so bathed with light, and gilded with noon-day beams, that the eye is instinctively drawn to it, and the admiration of the heart is won by its splendour. Still that does not destroy the fact, that many a hill and dale are lying between that peak of glory and the spot upon which we stand. We stand here to-day, and taking the map

of inspiration, and spreading it out before us, we get a "bird's-eye" view of the future. We see many a hill and vale yet between us and the end; but yonder, rising above all, is "the coming of our Lord," and that is the most glorious point of attraction to which our aspiration burns, for there we see the grand climax of our redemption, which is ready to be revealed in the last times. Still we dare not forget that we and the Church of Christ have yet to tread the path that leads to that consummation; and, in so doing, there are yet some steeps to climb, some valleys to pass, and, thanks be unto the Lord, some healthful and pleasant high lands to enjoy, surpassing in beauty anything the pilgrim-church has yet met with; and much as we long for the final summit, we must not repine at the way that leads thereto.

This hope is the great question of controversy between the two classes of millenarians, to which we have alluded this evening. There is a kind of Eve-like impatience about our brethren on the other side which is most unhealthy and deceiving. You will remember that the mother of us all had no sooner given birth to a son than she exclaimed, "*I have gotten a man, the Lord;*" meaning, that the *promise was fulfilled, and that the Deliverer who should bruise the serpent's head had come, and that the curse should now be stayed.* Poor woman! how great was her delusion, as she bitterly proved, when the lifeless corpse of her second son lay stretched upon the cold ground by the cruel hand of that very Cain. The like impatience seems to have possessed the breasts of some other antediluvians; but there was some excuse for them, as the pen of inspiration had not at that time sketched the intervening distance. The same excuse cannot be pleaded since the revelation of God has been completed. For now we not only know that Jesus shall come again, but we also know that much has to be done to prepare the way of His coming; and it is neither ignorance nor indifference that teaches us to work, and to wait, till these things be accomplished.

Having thus briefly given an idea of our faith and hope in the personal and visible coming of our Lord, I come to notice—

II.—*That the final Advent of our Lord does not compass all the promises made of His coming.*

From what I have already said, no one can doubt our warm appreciation of the Second Advent. Yet that is the consummation only. And our text shows, that when He speaks of His coming, our Lord does not always mean *that final appearing*, nor does He even mean a *personal* or *visible* coming in *any sense* in which these terms are generally understood. These terms, “The coming of the Son of man,” and “The coming of the Lord,” are most comprehensive,—indeed, they are concrete terms, embodying in themselves the whole of Christ’s visits to the sons of men, whether those visits are in judgment or in mercy, whether they are spiritual, figurative, or personal. To take them, therefore, and to apply them exclusively to the last of these, is to destroy the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and to throw the scriptures into the greatest confusion.

In respect to the Divine promise, we resemble the former dispensation. It has been shown that over the Old Testament saints the one promise of the personal coming of the Lord hung for four thousand years; yet that promise of an incarnate coming was but one among a hundred comings with which they were threatened, or of which they had the promise. The Old Testament is full of illustration of this fact. The Israelites in Egypt were justified in expecting the Lord’s coming to them, for promise had long been made to them to that effect; and, at length, in the midst of their cruel bondage, Jehovah sends the message, “I AM COME *down to deliver you*,”—and He came; but the great promise of Immanuel was certainly not included or fulfilled in that coming. Again, Jehovah threatened Babylon (Is. xiii.) with His coming, declaring that the sun, moon and stars should be darkened at that time,—and at length He came, and the political heavens of Chaldea were clothed with night, and all

her great men fell to the ground. But that visitation had nothing directly to do with the gracious promise of a coming Redeemer ; nor could the birth of Jesus have fulfilled that prediction to Babylon. It would be utterly impossible to instance the numerous passages in which the Lord announces His coming to Israel and Judah, which comings were altogether distinct from, and were not fulfilled by, the Saviour's incarnation and life on earth. Among the grandest poetry of the Hebrew bards are those psalms which speak of the Lord's coming at different periods of Israel's history. Perhaps the prayer of Habakkuk and the eighteenth Psalm are sufficient proof of this. Nothing could be more majestic, and overwhelmingly grand, than those descriptions of the coming of Jehovah to His people, and yet there was no intention to describe in these either the *first* or *second* Advent of our Lord. And this is exactly what we find in the new dispensation. There are numberless events mentioned in the New Testament, in which the coming of the Lord is the great acting power, or the attractive centre, and yet the events to which I allude are altogether prior to the return of the Redeemer from heaven, and have nothing whatever to do with it. Does anyone question this? Look—

(1) At our text, the twenty-eighth verse—“*There be some standing here which shall not taste of death till they see the Son of man coming in His kingdom.*” For our present purpose it will matter but little what interpretation is here adopted,—whether the day of Pentecost is supposed to fulfil this prediction, which, however, seems too near to answer to the implied distance of time—as it evidently implies that most of those who heard Jesus would be in their graves before the event,—or whether the coming of Christ in judgment against Jerusalem is accepted as the meaning. One thing is certain, it was a different coming from the personal advent, which we know is yet future, and hence that future coming could not fulfil this. But

(2) Look at the twenty-fourth chapter of Matthew, and the corresponding chapters in Mark and Luke, in

which the "Son of man" is seen coming in the clouds of heaven with power and great glory, and the sun is darkened, and the moon withholds her light, and the stars fall from heaven. Surely this must be the second advent! Verily it is not; for our Lord assured the people who heard him, that the generation then living should not pass away till *all* these things had taken place. Read His own words, "Verily, I say unto you, this generation shall not pass away till all these things be fulfilled." "This, on the face of it," says Dr. Brown in his critical commentary, "is so decisive, that those who think the prophecy refers to the second coming of Christ, and the final Judgment, are obliged to translate the words 'This (Jewish) *nation*,' or 'This (human) *race*, shall not pass away,' &c. But besides that, this is quite contrary to the usage of the word. Just think how inept a sense is brought out by translating 'this race,' for who could require to be told that the human family would not have passed away before certain events occurred which were to befall the human race? And how pointless is the other sense, that the Jewish *nation* would not be extinct before those events! Whereas, if we understand the words in their natural sense—that the generation then running should see all those predictions fulfilled,—all is intelligible, deeply important, and according to literal fact."

The language is very strong here, but it is not stronger than some of the older descriptions of the Lord's coming in vengeance upon Babylon,¹ Egypt,² Idumea, &c.;³ and, therefore, as the plan and general use of language demands that it should be fulfilled within the first century of the Christian era, we have no escape from the conclusion but that it was so fulfilled, without, however, the glorified humanity of our Lord being visible, and without His coming in any other way than in judgment against the Jews, and for which coming He specially prepared His followers, that they might escape the vengeance in that terrible hour.

(1) Isaiah xiii. Isaiah xxxiv. (2) Ezekiel xxxii.
(3) Psalm xviii.

And so well did they understand it as applying to themselves, that they literally fled from the danger as their Lord had bidden them.¹ But

(3) Our Lord promised another kind of coming, in which He would secretly manifest Himself to His loving disciples amid the care and anxiety of this present life. Hear what He says,—“If any man love Me, he will keep My words; and My Father will love him, *and We will come unto him*, and make our abode with him.”² These words are very emphatic and full of importance, and they help us to see what a depth of meaning there is in “the coming of the Lord.” Indeed, had we a full conception of His coming, we should be ever on the alert for Him, not in His second advent simply, but in the many ways in which He has promised to visit us. He is constantly coming like the light of day, cheering and blessing the children of men. Does any one say the sun does not visit us because it is ninety-five millions of miles distant? Let him,—it won’t deprive you of the enjoyment. You sit in your room; ’tis dark, for the morning has not yet come; but you watch and wait for it; and gradually the light breaks upon your eyes, and as gradually the sun rises over the eastern hills, and over your neighbouring housetops, and kindly smiles in at your window, and you feel and know that the sun has verily and truly come to you, and all the scientific arguments of astronomers could not rob you of that visit. Just so is it with the Christian mind: it is dark and dreary, but the soul waits on God; yea, “more than those that wait for the morning.” Nor does the believer wait in vain. The loving Redeemer responds to the cry, and leaping over all the mountains which have been piled between He again comes, and His presence brings *light*, and *joy*, and *peace*, and that man knows that the Lord has come,—yes, has verily and truly come to him; nor could all the arguments of men dissuade him from the

(1) “There is reason,” says Mr. Barnes, “for believing that not one Christian perished in the destruction of Jerusalem.....They fled to Pella, where they dwelt when the city was destroyed.”

(2) John xiv. 23.

fact that the Sun of Righteousness had arisen with healing in His wings. Would you shut off this visit of mercy as not included in "the coming of the Lord"? In doing so, you would deny the Saviour's own words, and cheat your soul of real joy. But

(4) The Lord promised to come and receive His followers at death. "*And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also.*" And did not these disciples expect the coming as here promised? They were told that they should be hated for Christ's sake, and should be KILLED in His cause by cruel persecutors; therefore they did not expect that His coming would save them from dying: when, then, did they expect Him to fetch them home? There can be but one answer to this question: they expected Him at the time of their departure to conduct them to the mansions which He had prepared, nor were they deceived. Take the case of Stephen as an illustration. This first Deacon of the Christian Church was full of the Holy Ghost and of faith, and was honoured as the first martyr for Christ. In his defence he declared that he saw the heavens opened, and "the Son of man" standing on the right hand of God. This so enraged his persecutors that they ran upon him with one accord, and cast him out of the city, and stoned him. But is he alone amid the pelting storm and wicked blasphemies of the populace? No! he is not alone. Jesus, who had before promised to come and to receive His disciples, is there; and confidently the martyr commits himself to Him, in these ever-memorable words, "*Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.*" Can any Christian call this in question as being one among the tens of thousands of cases in which the promise of Jesus has been fulfilled? and has it not always furnished the faithful with a proof of the fulness and integrity of that consoling promise of our departing Lord, amid the last moments of this earthly frailty, and the first scenes of the invisible world? To deny this would be to run counter to the spiritual instincts of the Church of God, and to quench the light which cheers the saint in prospect of the

valley of the shadow of death ; for are not thousands to-day living in the joyful hope of being thus visited and received ? But

(5) In the Epistles to the Churches in the second and third chapters of Revelation we have another view of our Lord's coming. The Saviour, several times in these two chapters, threatened to come to those churches who were declining or disobedient, unless they repented and did their first works. That He came to them, and removed their candlestick out of its place, no one can doubt, as he looks upon the ruins of the cities in which these churches dwelt. Now in all these several instances—which might have been greatly multiplied—we have abundant proof of the Lord's coming in Gospel times, without, however, coming in what is understood as a personal or visible form ; and with these indisputable facts before us, we must be careful not to lay down any arbitrary rules which would limit "the coming of the Lord" to any one favourite visitation. I have tried to show that we have one, and *only* one, more personal coming hanging over this dispensation ; and I think we shall see, in this course of lectures, that that Advent cannot take place for more than a millennium yet to come ; and, therefore, with earnest and holy affections do I entreat you, in the language of Paul—upon this very subject—not to be led away by any false teaching,—"*Now we beseech you brethren, by the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, and by our gathering together unto Him, that ye be not soon shaken in mind, or be troubled, neither by spirit, nor by word, nor by letter as from us, as that the day of Christ is at hand. Let no man deceive you by any means.*"¹ Now if it was right for the Thessalonians to feel sure after this that the day of the Lord could not come until certain foretold events had taken place, it is just as right for us to feel assured that *He will not come till other events which have since been revealed, as intervening, have also occurred* ; and hence we ought not to expect that day till after these events have come and gone.

(1) 2 Thessalonians ii. 1—3.

But I shall be asked, *Will not this view of such great distance lead men to carelessness, and the old cry, "The Lord delayeth His coming"?* Never, if His truth is faithfully stated. Which, I ask, is the most likely to do evil in the world, and to lead to scepticism, and carelessness,—to make false representations, and to be always crying "the Lord is coming" when He is not, or to state the truth, though that should place Him ever so distant? "It is worthy of remark," says Dr. Urwick, "that *the only errors mentioned in the New Testament representing the time of our Lord's coming all consist in dating it too early.*" The Dr. then gives us several examples; here is one,—"The case of the servant, represented as saying, 'My lord delayeth his coming.' The servant had taken up a wrong impression of the date when his master was to be looked for, and, as his master did not show himself according to that false date, the servant, instead of distrusting his own understanding, memory, or calculation, as the case might be, acted on the assumption that his master would not come as had been promised, and so acted to his ruin."¹ I have tried to prevent you who hear me from making any such fatal mistakes as this wicked servant made, whilst, at the same time, I have endeavoured to impress upon you the certainty that the Lord will come as the Judge, and awful, indeed, will be the day of His coming. Nor is it, for any practical purpose, far distant from any of us, seeing that when we die, *time with us* will for ever cease. I have also shown you that we are encompassed about with many promises and threats of His coming in other senses; and concerning these other visits, He bids us to watch, and to watch always. The Saviour never bade His disciples to expect His final coming in their day; but whenever He cautioned them to watch and to be ready it was for some other coming which was near at hand. Nor does He bid us to watch for His immediate coming in the clouds of heaven; for to us it is certain that that event will not happen for at least a thousand years after

(1) Second Advent, pp. 46—47.

we are in our graves. May I not become indifferent, then? Not for a moment, for He tells me He is coming in other ways, and I know not a moment but He may be here.

“ So I am watching quietly every day,
 And looking unto the gates of His high palace
 Beyond the sky;
 For I know He is coming shortly
 To summon me.
 And when the shadows fall across the window
 Of the room
 Where I am working my appointed task,
 I lift my head to watch, and ask
 If He is come,—
 And the Spirit answers softly
 In my room—
 Only a few more shadows, and
 HE WILL COME.”

And, with the full knowledge that He may come and summon me *any moment*, how can I be careless, or do other than watch for His coming? How oft, indeed, does He come, and His visits cheer us on our weary way! In this congregation there may be some troubled heart longing for a glimpse of His face; and, it may be, whilst I am speaking, He may come to that mourner, and turn his sorrow into joy. There may be another here, careless and impenitent, who has never really been moved by judgment, nor mercy; the threats of Jesus awake no fear, and the promise of Jesus stirs no emotion in that heart; and does that man say, “*the day of the Lord is far away, and to-morrow shall be as to-day, and more abundant.*” Thou fool, it may be that this night thy Lord may come.

“ When the moonless night draws close,
 And the lights are out in the house,
 When the fire burns low and red,
 And the watch is ticking loudly
 Beside thy bed :
 This very night, it may be,
 He may come.”

And oh, if He should thus come, what, careless sinner, would then be your doom?

There are, also, many cold Ephesian and Laodicean churches in Christendom. Can they grow hardened because the Lord will not personally come for yet awhile? Hear what He says to Sardis,—*“If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief; and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.”* And what the Lord meant by His coming, the terrible overthrow of that church and city must testify; the ruins and desolation of which should ever make all false churches tremble and fear before Him.

But will not our views of the Lord's coming deprive the Christian of much stimulus and motive power? Never! It did not deprive Paul or Peter of any, though they both knew that the Lord would not personally come in their day. The former, in his last letter,¹ says, “I am ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing.” Paul knew, therefore, that he should die, nor did the expectation terrify or disappoint him. Peter, too, writes in a similar strain,—“Knowing that shortly I must put off this my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.”² So that it is evident that this apostle never once expected to see the Lord's advent during his life time, though he was behind none of the apostles in encouraging the saints to look for the coming of the Lord. Hence it is evident he did not mean by any of his representations to convey the idea, that the great day of the Lord was at hand. We may be told of the sanctifying power of an immediate expectation of Christ's appearing; but this kind of talk is of very little importance in the face of facts which may any day be given,—for there are those who hold post-millennial views who live as holy lives as any persons have ever lived since the apostle John, whilst there are others who talk about the day

(1) 2 Tim. iv. 6—8.

(2) 2 Pet. i. 14.

of the Lord, and the probability of speedily going up into the clouds, whose lives will not bear the test of scripture, or the light of human scrutiny; hence, no bare doctrines will produce holy living apart from sanctifying grace. What can be more sanctifying and stimulating to the Christian than to know that he is not alone, but that the Lord Jesus is ever with him, or that he is ever expecting to meet Him—in His house, at His mercy-seat, or at His table; by faith to see Him, and feel Him near; and beside, not knowing a moment but that He may come to release the earth-bound prisoner from his cell, and call him to inherit the mansions prepared for him before the foundations of the world. He is constantly making such visits; and there is no doubt that whilst our minds have been engaged in this exercise, He has come to more than one redeemed spirit, to deliver it from the earthly tabernacle, and to carry it above.

And now, in conclusion, let me press upon every heart the solemnity of the topic upon which we have been dwelling this evening,—not to terrify you with a visionary and unscriptural representation, but to lead you to feel the vast importance of those visits of our divine Lord,—one of which was to make an offering for sin; another will be to render to every man the reward of his deeds done in the body, whether good or evil. And then, amid the solemnities of that day, will it be seen who has hearkened to His voice, and who has despised and rejected His message of mercy and love. And oh, my dear hearer, watch for the Lord, and wait for Him. He is coming every day, and every hour, to comfort the weak, to bind up the broken in heart, and to take His loved ones to His home in the skies. Seek ye His face, call ye upon Him whilst He is near, for “blessed are all they that wait for Him.” And you shall then know the sweetness of His visits to His meek disciples here, and at length shall be honoured with a place among “the spirits of the just made perfect”; and, finally, after your body has long been slumbering in the tomb, it shall be awakened by

the last trump at the final coming of the Lord, who shall welcome you, body and soul, into the kingdom of His Father ; whilst the scoffer and impenitent shall be cast into outer darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.

“ Mark that face of solemn beauty,
See that pure majestic brow,
Now the scoffing world beholds Him,
Every knee to Him must bow ;
See the strongest hearts all fail,
Hear, O hear the nations' wail.

Yet above the pealing thunder,
From the splendours of His throne,
Loud His voice, like trumpet sounding,
Gathers all His children home.
O great Lord, to Thee I flee !
In that day, O shelter me !”





LECTURE II.

"THE FIRST RESURRECTION."

Delivered Lord's Day, December 24th, 1871.

"This *is* the first resurrection. Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection."

Rev. xx. 5, 6.

FOR the purpose of giving distinctness and perspicuity to the views I am about this evening to advocate, allow me to state clearly at this early moment, *that I am fully persuaded that the righteous and the wicked will rise from their graves together in the same hour at the last day of time*; and that until the very last trump of God shall sound there is not a single line in scripture to lead us to expect that any one body will literally arise from the dead. And hence, whatever may be the meaning of the text I have just read, it is to me perfectly certain that it has nothing whatever to do with a corporeal resurrection.

It may be an advantage to my hearers to have thus early before their minds this negative proposition, which I purpose to maintain and illustrate in the present lecture, as it will help them the better to see from the onset the point to which my remarks tend.

Should any inquirer desire to know by what law of interpretation we have arrived at this strong conviction, there is no better answer than the well-recognized

canon¹—"That in settling of controversy, those passages of God's Word which are literal, dogmatic, and clear, take precedence of those which are figurative, mysterious, and obscure." Now, as the "literal, dogmatic, and clear" portions of God's word state that the righteous and wicked shall be raised at the same hour, their universal testimony must be accepted, and this one passage, which is full of figure—and found, too, in the most figurative book which God has given to us,—must be made to harmonize with those plain and positive texts; and especially, too, as this is the only place in all the scriptures, in which any mention is made of a first resurrection, except it be in passages which relate to the resurrection of our Lord, which no one could confound with this.²

Still, though this is the only place in which mention is made of such an event, that does not deprive it of its importance. Here it is plainly recorded; and we are not to look about to see what meaning we can bring to it, but we have to seek to know what is *the* meaning which the Divine Spirit intended.

In doing this, I do not intend to lead you through all the labyrinths of controversy, but I shall lay down as plainly and definitely the affirmative proposition, declarative of its meaning, as I have laid down the negative one, which shuts out from it the literal rising of any portion of the human family from the tomb.

What I submit then is this, That those symbols which portray what is here declared to be the "first resurrection," are intended to set forth *the grand triumph of the Gospel, and of the Church of Christ, which for so long a time has been persecuted and crushed by Antichrist*. Whenever, then, the doctrines and disciples of Jesus shall gain a universal victory the "first resurrection" will be realized. This proposition may doubtless seem reasonable enough to most minds; yet to some others the questions will arise,

(1) Bampton Lectures, 1854, p. 8.

(2) Acts xxvi. 23—"That Christ should suffer and that He should be the first that should rise from the dead, and should show light unto the people and to the Gentiles. Also 1 Cor. xv. 20—"But now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that slept."

“Will that triumph ever come?” and, if so, in what sense can that be the “first resurrection?” I hope these questions will meet with a satisfactory answer this evening.¹

It will readily occur to most persons that the idea of a resurrection has frequently been used as a figure in earlier pages of inspiration to set forth the resuscitation of life, both in a national and spiritual sense. Ezekiel’s vision of dry bones (to which we shall presently more fully allude), is a case in point, as are also the words of our Lord (John v. 25),—“*Verily, verily, I say unto you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead shall hear the voice of the Son of God, and they that hear shall live.*”² It is not therefore surprising that the victorious life of the church should thus be shadowed forth, seeing it is a figure with which all scripture readers are familiar; and since it is certain that the language cannot have a literal meaning here, there is no difficulty whatever in thus interpreting it. To give a *literal* sense to the passage would not only be in direct opposition to the plain statements of God’s word in other texts, but it would involve the whole vision in a literalism most absurd and ridiculous.

In establishing the proposition,—That the “first resurrection” is the triumph of the followers of the Lamb in the world, I will call your attention to the “REST OF THE DEAD,” mentioned in the fifth verse, which “lived not again until the thousand years were finished.” Now the plain meaning of these words is this: that at the end of the thousand years the persons spoken of would “live again,” and to *live again* is a resurrection; and so it happens; for at the end of the time mentioned we find the enemies of Jesus coming forth to battle against the saints, in whom we recognize the resuscitation of the old opponents of Christ and

(1) I am fully aware of the grave doubts which pre-millennialists cast upon the possibility of this triumph ever coming, though it be set forth more or less in the whole scriptures; whilst, on the other hand, they paint a millennium which is not only without a shadow of bible support, but has ten thousand more difficulties in the way of its realization.

(2) This passage, the reader will see, does not refer to the final resurrection, but to the awaking and raising to spiritual life those that are dead in trespasses and sins.

His church, who had been slain for one thousand years. If, then, we get the coming to life of two parties that had been slain during the apocalyptic struggles, we get a *first* and *second* resurrection, both of which are figurative, and both occurring some time before the final trumpet which shall awake the literal dead. That this is just what we do find to be the case will be seen as we proceed ; and as the first of these risings stands inseparably connected with the lifting of the world into moral life, and the delivering of souls from the second death, this great event may most emphatically be called "THE FIRST RESURRECTION."

It will be seen by all who are acquainted with this study, that in taking this broad and high ground we are not stopping to discuss the interesting question so often raised about the "*souls*" which John saw, though even here, logically, there is enough to overturn the literal idea, for nothing is said about *bodies*, but simply "the souls of the beheaded" lived and reigned ; nor do we stop to show that, if the passage was literally understood, only the *martyrs* could be raised, and hence the great bulk of the righteous dead would still remain in their graves ;¹ but the view we hold of the first resurrection will, I hope, render any argument of this kind unnecessary, and lead us earnestly to long for a part in that great triumph of truth and righteousness which is here so beautifully symbolized.

In coming more closely to our subject, let me intreat you to fix your mind very distinctly upon that grand display of truth and righteousness, so vividly shadowed forth upon the inspired page, and which we are anticipating in the world, when the pure religion of the cross, shall sway kings, and councils, and communities, and Christ be honored in every land ; when the Jew and the Gentile shall vie with each other in rendering Him homage ; and when Antichrist shall be cast down, and all false religions be done away. I do not tarry here to prove that such will be the glory of a future day ; that proof will be given in its proper

(1) Rev. C. Molyneux, an extreme pre-millenarian, admits that the passage speaks exclusively of Martyrs.

place. I simply ask you now to let this bright picture rise to your view, and, when you have done so, you will have nothing less than the scene which was figuratively portrayed before the prophet in Patmos, when he saw what was declared to be "the first resurrection." Having got that prophetic day of light and holiness clearly delineated before your mental vision, I shall seek to conduct you up to it by different paths, each path leading you in the end to exclaim in the words of the text, "This is the first resurrection." In attempting this, I observe—

I.—THAT THIS BRIGHT SCENE OF CHRISTIAN TRIUMPH IS THE RESUSCITATION OF THE LONG PERSECUTED AND CRUSHED FOLLOWERS OF JESUS. The history of truth and godliness in the world, is the history of a continuous warfare from the days of Cain and Abel till now, and so will it continue to be, until the events we are now studying have passed over from the prophet to the historian. And this struggle has more than once been set forth in figures like to those surrounding our text. Both the Old and the New Testament contain vivid illustrations of this fact. We constantly see two parties in the field,—the children of God, and the children of the world,—and these are striving for the mastery; and, as is usually the case, one day *this party* gets the advantage, another day *that*; and so the warfare goes on, until some decisive stroke is made, which for a while determines the victory, and often the holy seed seem to be the greatest sufferers; yet, after they have been slain and put into their graves, we see them rise again, and "the upright have dominion in the morning."

A more apt illustration to this effect could scarcely be found than in the case of the Hebrews in Babylon. I need only to remind you of Ezekiel's vision of the dry bones, to call up all the imagery of death and the resurrection; without, however, implying the coming back to life of any one of the Jews who died in captivity. Let us turn to the twenty-sixth chapter of Isaiah, and see how the Holy Spirit has interwoven this imagery into the triumphal song of Judah, as he

returns from Chaldea. Here we have the two parties—God's friends and God's foes. Here we have two deaths—the death of the friends and the death of the foes; and then we have the resurrection of the former, whilst the latter, their old enemies, still lie in their graves. Just look at the chapter I have cited, and taking the events in their historical order you will see the Jews as a nation slain and put into their political graves in Babylon; and, in alluding to that sad condition, the Church says, in the thirteenth verse, "*O Lord our God, other lords beside Thee have had dominion over us.*" Which dominion was unto death, as is seen in Ezekiel's vision, where the same people, speaking of the same calamity, exclaim, "*Our bones are dried, and our hope is lost; we are cut off from our parts.*" This was the feeling of the whole house of Israel (Ezekiel xxxvii. 11).

But the wheel of Providence moves round, and, in turn, these Chaldean lords have to die; and in the fourteenth verse of the same chapter of Isaiah their death is recorded. "*They are dead, they shall not live; they are deceased, they shall not rise; therefore hast Thou visited and destroyed them, and made all their memory to perish.*" Here the *enemies*, then, are in *their* graves, which was seen in the utter fall of Babylon and the succession to power of the Medes and Persians. But what becomes of the people of God? Coming down to the nineteenth verse, we have a glowing account of their resurrection. I give the prophet's words in another than the authorized version,—"*Thy dead shall live, my dead body shall arise, awake and sing, ye inhabitants of the dust, for thy dew is as the dew upon herbs, and the earth shall cast out the dead.*" Here we have the rising again of the captives, and their return to national life and prosperity, precisely corresponding to Ezekiel's version of the same deliverance. "*Thus saith the Lord, Behold, O my people, I will open your graves, and cause you to come up out of your graves, and bring you into the land of Israel, and ye shall know that I am the Lord when I have opened your graves, O my people, and brought you up out of your graves.*" It would be

almost impossible for any one to mistake the meaning of all this, as no one would be so foolish as to suppose that this resurrection was a literal rising of the dead Jews from their graves, spread over the lands of Nebuchadnezzar, or that it meant anything more than their release by Cyrus, and their coming again to the land and privileges of their fathers. Here, then, we have an unmistakeable rule of interpretation to guide us in the exposition of our text.

Coming into the New Testament with these same ideas of the *two great parties—their conflicts, their deaths, and their resurrection*—how do we find them to apply? The Apocalypse is full of illustration. We no sooner open the book than we find the warfare between the friends and foes of Jesus waging, and, though they change their names, their appearance, and their tactics, their identity is unmistakeable. The friends are introduced to us as “companions in tribulation,” “the church,” “the servants of God,” “the saints,” “the woman clothed with the sun,” and “the bride of the Lamb.” The foes are “the Roman horse,” “the red dragon,” “the ten-horned beast,” “the star from heaven,” “the whore of Babylon,” and “the old serpent, the Devil.” Whether the foe is clothed in the old Pagan dress, or the Papal scarlet, or whether he comes from the political heaven like Mahomet, or rises out of the ground like the two-horned beast, the Woman and the Man-child are the objects of his implacable hate; and, alas, how greatly does he prevail, as the souls under the altar, the slain witnesses, and the blood of the martyred saints fully testify. And thus, with little relief, the panoramic strife passes before our minds. Here we see a mighty angel arising from the east, to bid the winds to withhold their destructive power till the elect of God are sealed; there we see another good angel with a little book in his hand; and yonder we behold a slain witness or two coming to life. But what are these glimpses of Augustine or Lutheran brightness amid the long and gloomy triumphs of the great whore upon the scarlet beast, and the terrible ravages of the dragon and the false prophet?

Is there no change? Will not God avenge His own elect? Verily He will; for He tells those who cry from the altar, who has been slain for the word of God—
*"That they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow servants also, and their brethren that should be killed as they were, should be fulfilled;"*¹ clearly intimating, that at that time He would certainly avenge the blood of His saints.² With this intimation the canvas passes along, and war and woe follow each other as the trumpet is sounded, or the vials poured forth. At length the nineteenth chapter comes in sight, and the Heavenly Rider, whose name is the Word of God, goes forth. His eyes are as a flame of fire, His vesture is dyed with blood, out of His mouth goeth a sharp sword, whilst He bears the name of KING of kings, and LORD of lords. And all the fowls of heaven are summoned to feed on the slaughter He is about to make. Meanwhile, the old enemies have once more gathered to battle, under the leadership of the beast and the false prophet. But speedily the Captain of the long crushed saints, conquers and destroys these hellish leaders, and the remnant of their armies are slain with the sword, and immediately the old serpent, the Devil, is bound and cast into prison, that he should deceive the nations no more for a thousand years. And at once the saints of God come forth (as the Jews out of Babylon) from their graves of oppression, persecution, and adversity, and they live; and He who came forth, and gave them the victory, still abides with them, and they reign with Him; whilst the other party, like the old Chaldeans are put into their graves, only with this difference, that they will live yet again at the end of the thousand years.

Now I ask you, my dear hearers, when you have witnessed all these scenes, which the hand of inspiration unrolls before your eyes, in which for hundreds of years

(1) Rev. vi. 11.

(2) Those "slain for the word of God," and those "beheaded for the witness of Jesus," (as in chapter xx.), are supposed by Dr. Brown to mean the martyrs who were slain under Pagan Rome; and their brethren and "fellow-servants," who were yet to be killed, to mean those who would die under Papal Rome.—*Brown, on Second Advent, p. 232. Fifth Edition.*

the church of Christ is represented as persecuted, depressed and slain; when at length her enemies are silenced, no more to persecute nor oppose for a thousand years; and when you behold that church rising up with new vigour and life from her long and painful death; I ask you, if, when you see her thus inspired with the light, love, and zeal of the very best of her long list of members, if you will not instinctively, and exultingly, exclaim, "*This is life from the dead.*" And supposing you knew that the slain enemies would arise again, though not for a thousand years to come, would you have any difficulty in recognizing in all this godly victory the FIRST resurrection? I feel assured you would not! Nor would you expect literally to find in this resurrection-company any of the martyrs,—not Paul nor Polycarp, not Peter nor *John Huss*, not even Ridley or Latimer, no more than you would have expected in the restored temple, in the days of Zerubbabel, any of the thousands of Hebrews who died, and were buried on the banks of the Euphrates. Nor could you expect to find Christ personally or visibly among them, more than you could expect Him literally to ride a white horse, or literally to carry a sharp sabre proceeding out of His mouth. Let, then, all these figures have their proper meaning, and all are *beautiful* and *congruous*, and the whole picture presents us with the brightest hopes for the church's earthly future, all of which is in perfect harmony with the general triumph of the cross and with every part of God's revelation. Seeing, therefore, that the bible everywhere leads us yet to expect this glorious triumph of Christianity in the world, in which triumphs all the figures of this happy vision will be fulfilled,—and as that blissful state is to be introduced by the rising of the church from her long endured adversity and depression, just at the time when her old enemies are crushed and cast into their graves, no more to live till the millennium shall end,—we are bound to accept this triumph as the first resurrection.

It is very interesting to see how this history of the two armies corresponds to the history of the two great

leaders—the Seed of the Woman and the old serpent. Both are bruised ; both cast into their graves. Christ is slain during the supremacy of Satan : Satan is crushed during the supremacy of Christ. The death of Christ is the *time* of Satan's triumph : the bruising of Satan is the time of Christ's triumph. And so is it with their seed. The church, the seed of Christ, dies now ; the enemies, the seed of Satan, live. But the church must live ; and, as certainly, the seed of the serpent must die, and at the time contended for in this lecture, which will form the grand prelude to the reign of the saints, the commencement of which, I am fully persuaded, is described in the text. And as this spiritual victory of the church is contrasted with the “living again” of the seed of the serpent—that is, the “rest of the dead”—at the end of the thousand years, I purpose to show you a second reason why this event should be called the first resurrection, and why it should be pronounced to be so blessed and desirable. I, therefore, observe—

II.—THAT AS THE WORLD IS STILL LYING UNDER TWO DEATHS—SPIRITUAL AND PHYSICAL,—AND HAS TO BE DELIVERED FROM BOTH, THE TRIUMPH OF RIGHTEOUSNESS IN THE EARTH MAY EMPHATICALLY BE CALLED THE FIRST RESURRECTION.

I hope I need not spend much time to argue the existence of “two deaths” amongst us,—their proof must be evident to every thinking mind,—and both resulting from the same cause—sin. The first threat to man was, “*The day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.*” Our parents ate, and two deaths entered. The body became in a moment subject to death ; and, as the result, physical death has been reigning, not simply from Adam to Moses, but from Adam till now, as the myriads in the tenements of the cold tomb bear evident witness.

But painful as is this ghastly sight of universal mortality, the other death is still more so—that spiritual death of utter corruption of heart, and alienation of affection from God, which is seen in the universal prevalence of iniquity, and which inevitably finds its doom in eternal banishment from happiness

and life, and, in the language of this chapter, is "the second death."

These two deaths, though entering our world by the same door, and at the same moment, are nevertheless so distinct, that two resurrections are needed to deliver us from their grasp. Conversion to God is repeatedly spoken of in scripture under the figure of a resurrection, because therein the soul rises from the curse and dominion of sin, into the life and fellowship of Christ, and on such a man the second death hath no power, for he is literally delivered from condemnation; yet that marvellous resurrection does not free him from the other death, for men even "die in the Lord." Just so, on the other hand, there will be a resurrection of thousands from physical death, which resurrection will not however save them from the deeper destruction, for they will be cast into the lake of fire, which is the "second death." It follows, then, that if the curse is ever to be done away, two resurrections from death must be enjoyed. It would be impossible to find clearer illustration and stronger proof of this fact than in the case of our Divine Lord.

Strange as the statement may sound at first, every Christian will presently admit that our suffering Saviour died two deaths. Each mind that is open to scriptural teaching will readily conceive that the "Man of Sorrows" passed through a death far more terrible than all the *physical* suffering that He endured. There was a solemn and awful moment when our Lord began to experience the loss of the light and joy of His Holy Father's countenance, and His spotless soul became "sorrowful even unto DEATH." That moment was, when He was made a sin for us,—when, by a real transfer, our iniquities were laid upon Him. *Then* all our "sin was there by that transfer, and all the misery and death accompanied it; and even as it issued in the death of the body, so did it effect the death of the soul." For that soul of the ever-blessed "Redeemer was separated from God, and shut up amid the terrors and torments which are inseparable from sin." And thus, without any refined criticism,

"He descended into hell,"—not the locality of demons, but the state of separation from God ; where hell, not with its pollutions, but with all its agonies, rushed into His holy soul. These unfathomed agonies find expression in the piercing cry that comes forth amid the dense darkness of Golgotha—"Eloi, Eloi, lama-sabachthani." O believer ! O sinner !! can you doubt the soul-travail that gave birth to this utterance, or can you sound the depth of these wondrous words, "*My God, my God, why hast Thou forsaken Me*" ? And do you ask the reason of all this ?

"'Twas not the insulting voice of scorn
 So deeply wrung His heart ;
 The piercing nail, the pointed thorn,
 Caused not the saddest smart.
 But every struggling sigh betray'd
 A heavier grief within ;
 How on His burdened soul was laid
 The weight of human sin."

But the cup of wrath is emptied, the last pang of mental death is over, and the darkness, which for three long hours has buried the Crucified, clears away, and the Glorious Sufferer, ere He physically dies, spiritually rises into the light and enjoyment of Divine favour, when the "My God" gives place to the more endearing appellation, "My Father;" and once more seeing the "path of life," with a fulness of joy He enters into His presence, at Whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. Now this emerging from the curse we deem to be Christ's first, and most glorious, resurrection, and was His deliverance from the second death, just as His rising from the tomb, three days afterwards, was His triumphant resurrection from physical death ; and in both, He is the grand prototype of that new creation, which shall enjoy the "glorious liberty of the children of God." Having thus established the existence of two deaths in the world, requiring two resurrections, let us now see how this will help us in the understanding of the subject in hand.

From what we have seen in the foregoing remarks, it is certain that the resurrection *here* must mean a spiritual rising, as it is that which exempts those who

have a real part in it from the "second death." When, therefore, we shall see the world *governed* by holiness, and *led* by regenerated men, we shall see the world's "first resurrection," and as that will not be until Satan is bound it will be one and the same thing with this vision of John, and will invest this wonderful sentence—"the first resurrection,"—with a power and comprehension, which will show how divinely it had been chosen to include within itself every marked feature of those gracious times.

(1) Viewed in its individual aspect the triumph of Christianity may justly be called "the first resurrection." We have just seen how all men are involved in two deaths, and we have also seen how our glorious Leader rose from both. Now, as He rose, so must we rise, if we are ever to be like Him, and the first of these resurrections must be our passport into the kingdom of Christ, which can only be realized by a living faith in Him; and all such as thus believe are said to be quickened together with Christ, and are raised in the likeness of His resurrection, and over these the second death can have no power. Theirs is already a life of holiness, of light, and love; and, in the powerful words of Paul Gerhardt, each one of them may confidently sing—

"There is no condemnation, there is no hell for me,
The torment and the fire my eyes shall never see;
For me there is no sentence, for me death has no sting,
Since He, who died to save me, protects me with His wing."

Now when the earth shall be blessed with a race of men thus alive unto God by faith in Jesus Christ, will not all intelligences unite in calling it the first resurrection? It would be impossible to imagine any other than an affirmative reply to this question. But,

(2) Viewed in its Church aspect, the triumph of Christianity may as justly be called the first resurrection.

Since the church of Christ received her life at Pentecost, what vicissitudes has she been called to endure. She has been persecuted, corrupted, slain. For twelve hundred and sixty years Antichrist has been trying to

quench every spark of truth, and to stamp out every pulse of her spiritual vitality. Let it be remembered, that even Rome has never, since the establishment of Christianity, sought to get rid of the NAME, but only the *power* of godliness. And in all the slaughters and blood of martyrs, the extinction of *spiritual*, rather than the destruction of human, life has been the aim. And too far, alas, has Antichrist been successful, nor till this day has the church returned to her Pentecostal vigour. There has been, it is true, some token of vitality, as there was in the sneezing child at Shunem, but we need the life-giving Spirit to stretch Himself yet again and again upon us, warming and reviving our hearts, till, under His influence, the church shall awake, and arise, and stand up, a living power, to reign with Christ on the earth. Yet even then she will not be free from corruption, for her members will be still in the body, and one by one will pass away to the tomb, awaiting, with all the rest of mankind, the last trump which shall awake the dead; for this spiritual rising does not free from physical death, though it is a certain pledge that such *as thus live* shall also arise in the end in the likeness of Christ's glorious body. Now this new life will be so great as to lead both angels and men to recognize in it the unmistakeable signs of "the first resurrection;" and as it will also synchronize with the vision before us, we see this additional reason for the words of our text. But

(3) Viewed in its world-wide aspect, the triumph of Christianity may emphatically be called "the first resurrection."

"We know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together till now," and the deepest groans are those arising from the moral degeneracy of the human race, for it is too true that "only man is vile." But this terrible incubus is to be thrown off, and "truth is to spring out of the earth," and "righteousness to look down from heaven," and the people shall praise the name of our God, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him. But when shall these things be? The answer is nigh at hand: When Satan shall be bound;

when infidelity shall be cast down; when the Jew shall look on Jesus and mourn, and his reception into the family of Christ shall be "life from the dead;" when "the heathen shall stretch out his hand unto God;" and when the name of Christ shall be blessed from the rising to the going down of the sun; and though thorns and briars may still infest the ground, and though the mother-earth may still be burdened with the dust of the mouldering dead, yet this wonderful change, this moral life, will assuredly be "the first resurrection" of our world, and will also be a pledge of the second, when all corruption shall be done away, and the last vestiges of the curse be removed; and this earth, fully refined, shall rise into its pristine purity, to stand for ever as the monument of Divine power and redeeming grace.

And now, beloved hearers, as you take all these thoughts together, fix your mind upon that blessed period, to which the finger of inspiration everywhere points,—the period when the enemies of the Lord shall be trodden down, when the church shall lift her head with joy, when truth shall reign, and when the world generally shall rise from the moral grave of unholiness in which it is yet buried, and the Jews shall be gathered in with the fulness of the Gentiles. Fixing your mind upon that period, can you find any figures, or phraseology, more fitting and appropriate to represent it, than those you find in the first six verses of the chapter from which our text is taken? In that day we shall have a rising of the long-depressed church to universal power; a rising of truth and righteousness,—yea, a rising of the great heart of the world to God; and as that will precede the rising of the enemies, who shall once more come forth to oppose the kingdom of Christ, and as it also precedes the rising of the bodies of men, and will be first in importance, as well as in order, it will most assuredly be "the first resurrection." And yet in all this there will be no return of any dead saint to our earth, or any *bodily* appearance of the great Captain of our salvation, but all will be purely spiritual, differing only in *degree* from the true church

of these times. What this degree of advantage will be, we may easily gather from this vision ; for as the spirit and power of Elijah were alive in John the Baptist, and as John Huss, and Jerome of Prague, were said to live again in Martin Luther and the other Reformers, so the power and spirit of the martyred and undefiled hosts shall live and reign for a thousand years.

And now, in conclusion, let us not forget, that this gospel, which we hold in our hands, and love in our hearts, and are trying to preach to our fellow men, is the mighty instrument which, by the power of God, is to effect this change. Let us not dream of anything else ; God has never promised anything else ; and we need nothing else ; for this is “ the power of God to salvation.” He might make His dispensations of providence accessory, as probably He will ; for we are taught to expect that He will overturn, and overturn, till He shall come, whose right it is to reign. Still it will be by the spirit of all grace that His kingdom will come, the proof and nature of which will more fully be seen in our next lecture.

Meanwhile, let us not overlook the personal bearing of this whole subject : “ *Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection ;* ” “ *on such, the second death hath no power.* ” For though we may not live to that period of earthly happiness, which I have been describing, yet we may even now have a part in that blessedness which will, even then, be the best feature of that “ first resurrection.” We have seen what the second death means, in the unutterable anguish of our blessed Lord when He took the sinner’s place ; that death we all must die, unless we escape it by virtue of His enduring it in our stead. Dear hearer, reject His salvation, and that *second death* is the inevitable result ! Flee to His cross, make Him your surety and saviour, and immediately you will have part in “ the first resurrection ; ” and whatever else may come, this one thing is certain, that on you “ the second death shall have no power.”

And you, ye saints, who oft have prayed, and

laboured amid tears and disappointments, be not dismayed, deliverance will yet come, and your cause will yet prevail ; and though ye have long lain in the dust, and often are insulted by your foes, the morning of triumph shall change the whole scene, and the church shall hear the summons—

- “Daughter of Zion, awake from thy sadness ;
Awake, for thy foes shall oppress thee no more ;
Bright o’er the hills dawns the day-star of gladness !
Arise, for the night of thy sorrow is o’er.
- “Strong were thy foes, but the arm that subdued them,
And scattered their legions, was mightier far ;
They fled like the chaff from the scourge that pursued
them,—
Vain were their steeds and their chariots of war.
- “Daughter of Zion ! the power that hath saved thee,
Extoll’d with the harp and the timbrel should be.
Shout ! for the foe is destroyed that enslaved thee,
The oppressor is vanquished, and Zion is free !”

And then shall all the world know the true meaning
of—“The First Resurrection.”





LECTURE III.

“THE MILLENNIAL GLORY.”

Delivered Lord's Day, Dec. 31, 1871.

“They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain : for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea.”

Isaiah xi. 9.

WE shall be all the better prepared to proceed with our present investigation if I detain you a minute or two in giving a *résumé* of the topics already discussed, and the conclusions at which we have arrived.

In our first lecture, we saw that “the coming of the Lord” has a very wide meaning in the scriptures, and in the New Testament too, where it is certainly applied in four or five different senses,—such as to His coming to judgment on Jerusalem—to His coming at Pentecost—to His visits of grace to those who love Him—to His coming to welcome home the redeemed at death—to His coming to comfort or chastise churches, as Philadelphia, Ephesus, Sardis, &c.—and to His final coming to judgment; all of which comings, with the exception of the last, are without any visible appearance of the Saviour among men. And for several of *these*, early Christians were exhorted to watch ; whilst they were never led to expect the last of them—commonly known as the Second Advent

—during their life-time. Indeed, it was made certain to them, that they would not continue in the flesh to witness that event. Paul and Peter both speak with confidence about their own deaths ; and the former besought the Thessalonians not to expect the day of the Lord as at hand ; and the earnest way in which he put this entreaty, or warning, before them, indicated how much he feared the consequences of a false theory upon the subject. We further saw that on the same grounds on which the Thessalonians were forbidden to expect the Second Advent, we are forbidden to expect it for at least a thousand years to come,—that is, until the millennium ends ; consequently no man on earth is admonished to look for that second coming in his life-time, for the Word of God does not resort to delusions to keep the world in awe.

Finally we saw, that, though it is positively certain that every person now living will die before the Advent, yet this does not destroy the force of any scripture that speaks of the Lord's coming, nor the cheerful hope of the church in His final visit to our world, seeing that it is as positively certain that He is coming every day to many, both in mercy and in judgment, which renders it necessary that all men should watch and wait for Him. And, furthur, as at death *time* will cease with us all, and as the intervening years between that event and the judgment will be but a short night, the salvation that shall be brought unto the godly at the appearing of our Lord may, in this sense, be anticipated as nigh at hand, as may also the heavy judgments which shall fall upon the wicked and impenitent in that day. Hence, let no one say that the post-millennial view undervalues the importance of the Second Advent, or that it gives men a license to indifference or vice, seeing that it teaches us scripturally to indulge in this blessed hope (as did Paul and the rest of the apostles, when, according to the present date, it was nearly two thousand years off), whilst, at the same time, it presents to the ungodly a most powerful view of the Lord's coming, which all must feel to be near at hand.

In our second lecture,—“The First Resurrection,”—we saw that that resurrection had nothing whatever to do with the coming back to life of any one person from the grave, not even of the martyred saints ; but that the one passage (which indeed is the only one in all God’s book which speaks of a first resurrection) is so full of figure, and surrounded with such symbolic representations, that it cannot be explained except on figurative grounds, without rendering the whole incongruous and ridiculous. It is, therefore, as certain as any symbols can teach it, that this first resurrection is intended to represent the glorious triumphs of the church of Christ in the world, when the doctrines of the Cross, and the disciples of the Lamb shall govern the earth, and the enemies which for hundreds of years have been raging against our God and against His Christ shall be universally subdued, and the zeal and devotion of the martyrs and confessors of earlier times shall live again, and the church and the world shall be as if those honoured saints had sprung once more into being, no more to be opposed by their foes for a thousand years.

It has struck me as quite possible, that some persons will imagine that Christianity at present is not suffering oppression, and hence has no such victory to obtain. Many will be ready to say, “All religions are now on an equal footing, and has nothing more to hope for in this direction.” Perhaps a more gross mistake than this could not be made, and I am urged on to show its fallacy by the newspaper reports of the pantomimic performances of certain churches during the Christmas festival of the past few days.

It seems as if many persons never recognise opposition to the truth, or persecution and oppression to the church of God, except in flames, or tortures on the rack ; whereas these form but a small part of the sufferings of the godly. I would that every hearer saw the evil which is done to Christ, and His Gospel, by the wretched formality and superstition with which we are surrounded. Humanly speaking, what opportunity is there for a pure gospel church in our day?

In speaking thus I am not desponding, but simply wish to call attention to the outward aspect of the religious world. Conceive, if you can, for a moment, what would be the status of a pure New Testament Church in these times : a church whose doctrines, ordinances, members, and officers, all accorded with the spirit and purity of the primitive age of Christianity. How would such a band of believers be looked upon by the pompous professors of to-day ? A clear idea upon this question would go far to show how the gospel of Christ is disadvantaged by the various forms of Antichrist on every hand, and how the fellowship of the godly is condemned and despised by the great bulk of religionists, who hold a kind of sway in the world.

A pure church is one that seeks to worship God in the spirit ; hence, she has no gorgeous drapery to please the eye, and no professional choir to charm the ear. She has no robed processions, no gilded crosses, no burning candles, to create and sustain sensational admiration. She has no pictures, images, Bethlehem-stars, nor baby-Christ ; no passion plays, no crucifixes to attract the populace ; not even flowers nor perfumes to gratify the senses. *Is it, therefore, any wonder*, whilst such baits as these are offered in carnal churches, that the multitude are led away by them, and that only here and there a few persons are satisfied with the true worship, which the sanctified offer, in the spiritual house of our God ?

That true church has no State arm to lift her into popular favor with the world, no power to palm her minister upon the support and the reverence of the community. She has no surplices or gowns to magnify her teachers. She has no sacraments to satisfy the credulous and weak. No ! for she preaches Christ crucified, and leans wholly on God for success, and dares not wear such armour to fight the battles of the Lord. *Is it any wonder*, then, that the formal and the vain pass her by with *scorn* and *contempt*, and please themselves with the bewitching vanities of an empty name ?

That pure church must maintain her purity. She must separate the precious from the vile, and the chaff from the wheat ; which discrimination will offend the formal and arouse the ire of the unholy. She has no open door to welcome to her communion the profane and ungodly, nor even the disobedient ; therefore, she suffers as being uncharitable and selfish ; but fidelity to her Lord demands all this at her hands, and His constraining love prompts her to obey at any cost.

Now, religiously and socially, what *locus standi* has that pure church even to-day ? There is not one of her ministers but has to suffer for his purity, nor even a domestic servant of her members but is at a discount, and that, too, among a professedly religious community. Does she desire then to share the State patronage and the carnal admiration of those of whom we speak ? Far, far be it from her. She wants no such a resurrection to power and carnal advantage, for she stands on firmer, because on scriptural, ground, and covets neither the money nor the influence that these associations bring ; but rather prays and waits for the time when the religion of Jesus shall be freed from all worldly and fleshly appendages,—when form shall give place to power, and superstition to gospel simplicity, thereby producing that wondrous change which shall be inferior only to the final resurrection of the church into the glorious image and likeness of Christ. For, then the beast and the false prophet will be no more, and Satan's power, restrained, shall no longer keep back the kingdom of God in the world ; but the millennium, with all its blessedness, shall be developed and enjoyed.

I should not be surprised to find some of my hearers wishing to know “when these things shall be.” Now, in turning aside for a moment to look at this question, I am not about to commit the folly of predicting the day, nor even the year, which shall proclaim their advent. There has been mistake enough already on this head. All that we can safely hope to do, is to learn what the Word of God says about the

times and the seasons, which the Father hath put into His own power.

There is one remarkable fact we might mention. Almost all students of prophecy, who have paid any attention to dates, have been brought to fix upon the times in which we are living as the period when the great changes in the church and in the world should come, so that this data has the advantage of the sympathies of both pre and post-millenarians. There are some few features of prophecy which have led to this harmonious conclusion.

The most superficial reader of the books of Daniel and the Revelation will scarcely fail to notice that a certain prophetical period is marked out for the Anti-christ, for though it be differently described, the length is precisely the same; hence, whether it is stated as "*time, times, and a half-time*," or as "*forty and two months*," or as "*one thousand two hundred and sixty days*," it will be seen that "*three years and a-half*" is the uniform length of these figures; and as a prophetical day is a literal year, one thousand two hundred and sixty years are assigned to the reign of the Papacy; so that if we could with certainty fix upon the date of its commencement, we could with certainty say when it would fall. But as there is an uncertainty about the beginning, there must be an uncertainty about the end. It is not at all unlikely that, as the "man of sin" did not develop himself at once, there may be two or more dates to commence from; and then it would follow that there must be two or more terminations, just as was the case with the captivity of the Jews. Seventy years was the allotted time; but as there were three dates to commence from, extending over eighteen years, so was the restoration gradual; and from the release and return of Zerubbabel with the first band, to the rebuilding of the Temple, *just about the same number of years elapsed* as from the carrying away of Daniel and the first company, to the burning of Solomon's Temple,—so that the seventy years may be made out from two dates. The same thing may probably be seen in the fulfilment of this prophetic

period in Daniel and the Apocalypse; and if this should be the case, it would follow that these figures would fit into different events, which may be separated in their termination from each other by several years. Thus, if the year five hundred and thirty-three, when Justinian made the Roman Pontiff head of all the apostolic churches, be reckoned as the commencement, the slaying of the witnesses, in one thousand seven hundred and ninety-three, would exactly correspond to that date, and would allow the one thousand two hundred and sixty years for the prophesying of those witnesses in sackcloth. Or if the year six hundred and six be taken as the commencement, the year when the Emperor Phocas confirmed the supremacy of the Pope, then the one thousand two hundred and sixty prophetic years, upon the calculation of Rev. R. Fleming,¹ would bring us to eighteen hundred and forty-eight, when the Pope was driven from Rome, and a popular government was set up in the very seat of the Papal power. But if we go to the later date of seven hundred and fifty-two, when the Pope began his temporal dominion, this will carry us on to the year nineteen hundred and ninety-four, according to prophetic time. Now, with these several events before us, each of which seem to claim attention, it is quite impossible to fix the final end of Papal rule; yet as the Pope has lost his temporal power, and is consuming away in his influence, we may safely expect his full end within the latest of these periods; and hence we are living in the transitional times when popery is to fall and truth to gain the ascendancy, which shall no sooner come to pass than the "first

(1) Mr. Fleming published his "Rise and Fall of Rome Papal" about one hundred and forty-seven years before the year eighteen hundred and forty-eight. It was certainly remarkable that these events occurred at the very date he had fixed upon so long before. His plan of calculation was that of making a year to consist of three hundred and sixty days only, which, upon the one thousand two hundred and sixty, would be eighteen years less than ordinary Julian years. If any critic should complain of the two modes of reckoning in the above paragraph, he has only to remember that the witnesses did not begin their prophesying in sackcloth *immediately* after Justinian's edict. It is said to be about twenty years after this, before the Roman Pontiff ordered heretics to be burnt, which would make the period of humiliation to agree as nearly as possible with Mr. Fleming's calculation.

resurrection" shall be realized, and the millennium ushered in. The great movements in the religious and the political worlds seem plainly to indicate that these calculations are not far wrong. Never, perhaps, has there been so much attention attracted to the "Man Christ Jesus" as now. "Ecce Homo" is but an expression of one type of the many minds who are led to "Behold the Man." The bible was never known as it is to-day. We are beginning truthfully to say of the scriptures, "every man hears them speak in his own language." Education is fast uprooting the superstitions of the heathen, and church establishments are all tumbling to the ground. These things, apart from prophecy, make us stand and look on, wondering what will be the next turn in the world's events; and in these days of sudden and gigantic changes, when the providences of God move round so rapidly, we might well exclaim with inspired words,—“Oh, wheel!” The past few years have done more toward the great revolution of the world than anything since the Pentecost. Sunday Schools, Missionary Societies, Bible and Tract Societies, all owe their origin to one generation; and the effects are seen in the one million of sabbath school teachers, and the ninety thousand preachers of the gospel of the present day. It seems as though we must be deaf indeed, did we not hear in all this the harbinger's voice, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord!" These signs are surely contradicting the gloomy prophesyings of those pre-millenarians, who are constantly declaring that the world will get worse and worse, till the Lord comes in person to the earth.

In trying to describe the scriptural teaching on the millennial glory, I shall begin by laying down this great proposition,—That the millennium will usher in no new dispensation: the church, the world, nature, and grace will be much the same then as now; Christ will be still where He is—at the right hand of God; the church will as much live by faith then, and be just as dependent on the Spirit of all Grace as she has ever been. Human nature will be depraved; and regeneration, and the Open Fountain, as needful as ever. The

ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper will hold their place, as in the days of apostles ; and commerce, trade, and social life be as to-day,—except that the law of righteousness will rule and influence all classes for the purity of society and the honor of Jesus. I make these remarks to correct certain wrong notions which may have been instilled into some minds by erroneous teachers upon these subjects. It is evident that there will be no new dispensation till the final end, when eternity shall succeed to time, and glory to grace ; for we are living in the last times ; so that we have in the church all that is requisite to make a millennium, except that we need more of the grace of the Holy Ghost, which has been kept so long from us by our unholiness and unbelief. Yet, though often grieved, the Spirit has not left us, but is still waiting to be gracious, and at the fitting hour He will

“Come as the dove, and spread His wings—
The wings of peaceful love ;
And make the church on earth become
Blest as the church above.”

If, then, the millennium ushers in no new dispensation, wherein will its glory appear ?

I.—THE GLORY OF THE MILLENNIUM WILL BE SEEN IN THE UNIVERSAL HOMAGE WHICH SHALL BE RENDERED TO CHRIST. When He had finished the great work of redemption below He ascended up on high, and sat down on the right hand of God, “from henceforth expecting till all His enemies be made His footstool.” And shall He expect in vain ? Never ! Shall He die,—conquer death,—subdue Satan, and then return to the Father, and send down His Holy Spirit to convince the world of *sin, righteousness, and judgment* ; and after all, secure no wider conquest than what we see to-day ? Never ! It would be a dishonor to Him to suppose this, as it would be a flat contradiction to His revealed truth to say so. There can scarcely be a greater error in all Christendom than that which pre-millenarians hold upon the kingship of Christ. They emphatically tell us, that our Lord is not yet a king, and will not be so, till He comes and sets up a temporal throne in

Jerusalem. To me, the man who would deny that Christ is a *Saviour* would be quite as near the truth; for Jesus is exalted by the right hand of God a *Prince and a Saviour*, to give repentance to Israel, and forgiveness of sins; and it is as wicked to deny one character of our Lord, as the other. Besides, He constantly spoke of the gospel rule in the world as His kingdom, and the kingdom of heaven. And it is beyond dispute, that the apostles ever understood that those prophecies, which spake of the Messiah as sitting on the throne of His Father David, were fulfilled as He rose from the dead, and ascended to the right hand of the Majesty on high. Hear the words of Peter in his Pentecostal sermon. "Men and brethren, let me freely speak unto you of the patriarch David.....Being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him, that of the fruit of his loins, according to the flesh, He would raise up Christ to sit on his (David's) throne.....He seeing this before, spake of the resurrection of Christ.....This Jesus hath God raised up, whereof we all are witnesses; therefore, being by the right hand of God exalted, and having received of the Father the promise of the Holy Ghost, he hath shed forth this. Therefore, let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God hath made this same Jesus, whom ye have crucified, both Lord and Christ." In these words, as explicitly as language can do so, it is stated that the promise to David was now fulfilled, the proof of which was the exercise of regal authority in the sending down of the Holy Spirit, as had that day been done. In this same way all the inspired writers spake of Him. And, in His own epistle to the church in Philadelphia, Jesus speaks in like manner. "These things saith He that is holy, He that is true, He that HATH THE KEY OF DAVID, He that openeth and no man can shut, and shutteth and no man openeth." If these words do not positively assert that He is David's successor, exercising kingly and uncontrollable power, then language has no meaning. But we need not argue; we know from His own lips that all power is in His hand, and He must REIGN till all His enemies be put under Him;

and though Jews and pre-millenarians may unite, as indeed they do, to rob Him of His kingly glory—

“His kingdom cannot fail ;
He rules o’er earth and heaven ;
The keys of death and hell
Are to our Saviour given.”

And this dominion has ever been, and still will be, the church’s only hope and confidence in her warfare here ; and had she nothing to stimulate her but the blessed prospect of witnessing universal homage and adoration to Him, she would find in that enough to constrain her to endure the greatest sufferings that He may be glorified. Beloved brethren, what a bright and happy day will that be, when prophecy shall become history, and the church’s prayers shall be exchanged for praise ; when “He shall have dominion from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth.” When

“Kings shall fall down before Him,
And gold and incense bring ;
All nations shall adore Him,—
His praise all people sing !”

Can there be any anticipation more glorious than this?—this bright and beautiful vision, which inspiration paints on a thousand pages as the just reward of our once suffering, but now exalted, Lord ! *Then* He was clothed in frailty, crowned with thorns, shamefully mocked with mimic robes, sceptre and homage ; but *now* He has put His “bright robes of triumph on,” is crowned with majesty and glory, whilst myriads in earth and heaven adore and magnify His precious name, and He will yet see of the travail of His soul ; for the day must come when, alike in the palaces of kings and around the camp fires of Ishmael’s sons, His name shall be as sweetest incense ; when “they in the wilderness shall bow down before Him, and His enemies shall lick the dust ;” when the proud and haughty Brahmin shall own His law, and the low and degraded Bushman shall rise up to call Him blessed ; when “Jesus” shall be substituted for Mahomet, and “Christ” for Buddha ; when every prayer shall be offered in His name, and every song shall be to His

praise. O blessed ! ever blessed day ! “dawn on these realms of woe and sin ;” and then shall the heavenly and earthly choirs unite in the song—“The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ, and He shall reign for ever and ever.”

I would fain linger on this one delightful aspect of the millennial glory, for the honour of Christ is that which lies nearest the Christian’s heart. But I must pass on.

II.—To notice THAT THE MILLENNIAL GLORY WILL BE SEEN IN THE PURITY OF THE CHURCH. Not that there will be any new law given, or new ordinances established, but the church will return to her first purity of faith and practise ; the innovations of Rome, and the superstitions of the dark ages, will be cast out, and the teaching of Jesus and Paul will be supreme. How our pre-millenarian advocates can maintain, as they do, that the old Jewish sacrifices and festivals are yet to be revived, is beyond our power to solve, except it be, that on this class of subjects they have so grieved the Holy Spirit, that He has given them up “to wander, in endless mazes lost.” Nothing is clearer in the scriptures of truth, than that the carnal ordinances of the Jews were designed to be done away, and *were* “done away in Christ.” Indeed, they were sacrifices in which God “had no pleasure,” and such as could never “make the comers thereunto perfect ;” but were typical of the great sacrifice, and were among the things that were shaken, and were removed, that this gospel “kingdom, which cannot be shaken,” may take their place, and remain for ever. To go back to these sacrifices and ceremonial observances would be in direct opposition to all the laws of God’s government from Adam till now, for His law has been one of progression, whilst this would be the reverse. It can easily be imagined how severely Paul would deal with these pre-millennial believers were he here ; we may be sure, from the undivided testimony of God’s word, that he would be as much against these notions of reviving the sacrifices as ever he was against the Galatian heresies ; indeed, these heresies of to-day are very similar to those, and the same inspired con-

demnation may be used of their teachers and adherents as of the old Judaizing leaders and followers,—“O ye foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you? Are ye so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”.....“How turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?” These are impassioned words, but not too strong for the circumstances, either then or now. It would be as consistent to believe that Noah would again enter the long-decayed ark, and that Abraham would once more attempt the offering of Isaac, as that the Jewish sacrifices will ever again be offered by Divine sanction. “Neither in this mountain of Samaria, nor yet in Jerusalem, shall ye worship the Father,” said Jesus; “but the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers, shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth, for the Father seeketh such to worship Him;” which words entirely sweep away all the old ideas of Jewish and ceremonial observances. The great evil of the church for many generations has been the incorporating of the Jewish spirit into it, which has always corrupted the faith and weakened the kingdom of Christ. The *tithes*, *festivals*, the *priestly class*, and *vestments*, are full proof of this, and are all antagonistic to the spirit of the gospel, and will have to disappear in the clearer light of millennial grace.

It may be safely concluded from the unity of the Spirit’s teachings, that in proportion as we have that Spirit as our guide, we shall come back, as churches, to His doctrines and precepts, as found in the epistle to early Christians. Let anyone read those doctrines and precepts, and conceive of their being studied when popery shall be gone, and the great deceiver bound, and he will instinctively come to the conclusion that the one body of Christ shall then come to the “one Lord, one faith, and one baptism,” and shall abound in love, keeping the “unity of the Spirit,” and practising the things that are *honest*, *pure*, and *lovely*, as there inculcated. And then, if ever, the Lord’s own prayer shall be answered, “That they all may be one; that the world

may know that Thou, Father, hast sent me." There have been a thousand attempts to bring the church into universal conformity, but all have failed, which has been a great mercy for the world ; for the creeds, beliefs, and confessions, have been human and carnal, and to have brought Christendom to them, would have been to have brought it down to the cold level of death ; but when the Spirit of all Grace shall come, like the tide that rises over the little puddles and ponds on the sea shore, the churches shall be taken out of their stagnant impurities, and be brought into the living ocean of truth and love. Then there will be no human heads recognised in Zion. Kings and queens, who shall be her nursing fathers and mothers, shall never usurp the place of the Head of the church ; and statesmen shall come to her to learn righteousness and judgment, and shall no more attempt to control her faith by their acts and state force.

And this purity of the body of Christ will be manifested in the purity of the individual members ; the holy admonitions to present our bodies as living sacrifices to God will be more perfectly complied with ; and the littleness and selfishness, which now disturb and cramp the energies of the church, will be forgotten when each man shall present himself to the Lord an offering in righteousness, and shall submit himself to His service with "pieces of silver." Then shall the light of one day be as the light of seven ; and, in the gardens of Zion, "instead of the thorn shall come up the fir tree, and instead of the brier shall come up the myrtle tree ; and it shall be to the Lord for a name, for an everlasting sign that cannot be cut off." If the scriptures teach anything at all, they teach us, that though the gospel church would have much warfare and conflict with Antichrist and the world, yet the day would come when her enemies should come bending down to her, and her purity and peace should be such as to draw forth the admiration and praise of the whole earth. Since this has never yet been the case, and since we are not to expect it till the stone cut

from the mountain side has smitten the great image on its feet of iron and clay and broken them in pieces, we are certain that these happy days are to fall in the millennium, and for this should every Christian work and pray ; for, *through the effects of the godly*, by the agency of the Divine Spirit, will these things come to pass. Nor are they now any great way off, for

“ The prophecies must be fulfilled,
 Though earth and hell should dare oppose ;
 The stone, cut from the mountain’s side,
 Though unobserved, to empire grows.
 Soon shall the mingled image fall
 (Brass, silver, iron, gold, and clay) ;
 And superstition’s gloomy reign
 To light and liberty give way.
 In one vast symphony of praise,
 Gentile and Jew shall then unite ;
 And Infidelity, ashamed,
 Sink in the abyss of endless night.”

III.—The third aspect of the millennial glory will be *the conversion of the Jews*. I am not about to enter at large upon the question of the restoration of the sons of Israel to their native land. The pre-millenarians write and talk about this subject as though it was the chief idea of the scriptures. I do *not* say that the Jews will *not go back* to Judea ; but I simply say, I do not know. I have read so much of the confused arguments of the restorationist, until I am in doubt concerning it ; but what I have to present to you is infinitely better. It is very remarkable, if the restoration of the literal kingdom of Israel is to be looked for, that we should find nothing concerning it in the teachings of the New Testament. So far as I know, *there is not one single text in all the gospels or epistles* that legitimately *implies even* that this will be the case. But we are there taught that the Gospel Church is the Jerusalem now ; and even in writing to the Hebrews, Paul assured them that they were come to “ Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, and to the Heavenly Jerusalem, by which language he evidently intended to show them the better realities they had found than what their fathers possessed who held the literal city.

We are further taught, that the Tabernacle of David was restored in the spiritual reign of Christ. In Acts xv., 13-17, when the apostles were consulting about the conversion of the Gentiles, James, quoting the prophecies from Amos, Isaiah, and others, showed the assembled church that what was then coming to pass in the gathering in of the heathen was just what they might have expected, for the Lord having returned, and built again the Tabernacle of David, the Gentiles seeking after the Lord *was the very next thing in order*. Here, then, as the Gentiles had begun to come into the church, the apostles accepted it as the fulfilment of prophecy. In doing so, they fully accepted the idea, that David's house and throne had been restored in Christ. So that we have *Jerusalem* and *David's throne* throughout the whole gospel dispensation. And we are further taught, that "he is not a Jew who is one outwardly;" but that the heathen, on becoming Christ's, are "Abraham's seed, and heirs according to promise." And in these we have the true Israel who worship God in the spirit, and to whom the old promises are made; so that there really is no necessity for a literal restoration to enjoy the promises of God, for we have them all now in Christ the Lord. Still we are led to believe that the literal Jews will be grafted again into the true Olive Tree if they "continue not in unbelief." That they will not continue in unbelief is certain from Rom. xi., 26, where it is said that "all Israel shall be saved;" and when that grand and glorious day shall come—when, with the fulness of the Gentiles, they shall come into the spiritual Zion, to bow before Him, Whom so long they have scornfully rejected, the great breach in the human family shall be healed, and the vail being taken away from their hearts, the glory of their literal dreams shall be forgotten in the blessing of the gospel which "excels in glory."

But let it not be supposed that their turning to the Lord will give them any special advantage over the Gentiles, or that they will set up a separate form of worship, or *church organization*. In Christ Jesus—Who is our peace—the wall of partition has been broken down,

never again to be built; and in Him, Greek and Jew, barbarian and Sythian, bond and free, are perfectly one,—washed by the same blood, sanctified by the same grace, bowing to the same law, they are, and ever will be, fellow-citizens in all the privileges and blessings of the household of faith; and whosoever would rebuild the wall of separation denies the faith, and does despite to the Spirit of Grace.

IV.—I observe, the millennial glory will be seen in the powerful effects of truth and righteousness on the *nations* of the earth. It requires no words of mine to prove the wide-spread misery which covers our globe. For nearly six thousand years the leading features of our world have been those of *strife, hatred, malice, selfishness, and death*, until the earth has been drenched with blood, and the air poisoned with pestilential breath. Everywhere God has been blasphemed! and in every place Satan has triumphed! The question now is, Will there be any change? Pre-millenarians say, “No; there will be no change, except it be that men will wax worse and worse.” To believe this statement we must blot out a great portion of the Word of God, and forget the promises of peace and good-will to men, and we must also throw away the hope of the saints in every age, and refuse to listen to the sweetest music of the inspired singers in Israel. But *no!* we dare not do this; every word of God is true! and—

“The cause of righteousness,
And truth, and holy peace,
Designed our world to bless,
SHALL spread and never cease.
Till God the Son shall come again
It must go on.—Amen! Amen!”

We admit all that can be said of the darkness and woe of our race, and of the comparatively slow progress of the gospel for ages past; but all these things agree perfectly with the prophecies that went before concerning them, which prophecies also open out *the brighter day at hand*. And already, as we have seen in this lecture, the dawn breaketh, for the light of inspiration is sending its cheering rays into the dark places of the

earth, and the morning song of Bethlehem is echoed back to the skies with increasing energy every year ; whilst the peaceful feet of Christ's heralds tread every land, and the heaven-sent leaven of gospel truth is silently permeating all classes of men. These signs of the times, together with the trumpet-notes of prophecy sounded by *David*, *Isaiah*, and *John*, awake us from our slumbers, and call us to the mountain top to wait for the coming day ; and here the faithful and wakeful believer may sweetly sing,—

“I am watching for the morning
Of a bright and glorious day,
That shall hush the world's deep groaning,
And wipe her tears away.”

Nor shall he watch in vain ; for, hour by hour, shall the light continue to increase, until the perfect day ; and what is now *confusion*, *discord*, and *mourning*, shall be turned into peace ; and intemperance, slavery, and vice, shall hide their heads ; and the millennial pictures of inspiration shall find their fulfilment in the harmony and righteousness of the inhabitants of our earth. For—

“No strife shall rage, nor hostile feuds
Disturb those peaceful years.
To ploughshares men shall beat their swords,
To pruning hooks their spears.
The happy child, in dragon's way,
Shall frolic with delight ;
The lamb shall round the leopard play,
And all in love unite.”

Now if these prophecies, which so abound in scripture, which seem to *labor* to bring in every emblem of peace and happiness, do not get a *literal* fulfilment, as indeed we do not expect them, yet there will be such a state of things in the earth as fittingly to correspond to these figurative descriptions.

It is also evident, that not only will men's minds be affected by the reign of righteousness, but even physical nature will receive peculiar blessing from God. It would seem that man will attain to a much greater longevity than he now enjoys, which would be a very

natural result of temperance, and purity of life, as more than half the diseases, and affliction, and poverty, and want around us, arise from drunkenness and vicious habits, which will then be diminished a thousandfold. "Then shall they plant vineyards, and eat the fruit thereof; and build houses and inhabit them; for as the days of a tree shall be their days, and they shall long enjoy the work of their hands." There are many scriptures which clearly indicate this aspect of the golden age, as there are not a few which show also that even the earth shall yield a more fruitful increase than it has hitherto done, though we have no idea of the wild dreams of some pre-millenarians, whose writings indicate the strongest signs of insanity. Lest anyone should think me uncharitable, I will repeat one short paragraph, which is a fair sample of much that is written in more modern days. The writer, speaking of the blessings which the saints shall enjoy during the millennium, says, "The days shall come, in which vines shall grow, each having ten thousand boughs; and on each bough, ten thousand branches; and on each branch, ten thousand switches; and on each switch, ten thousand clusters; and on each cluster, ten thousand grapes. And when one of the saints shall take hold of a cluster, another shall cry out, 'I am a better cluster,—take me; through me, bless the Lord.'" ¹ This quotation, no doubt, would be considered a most extravagant one; but there are others equal to it, in which corn and other fruits are spoken of; as there are also many, quite as unreasonable on other points, which I might have given from living authors,—passages which are more fitting to adorn the pages of the "Arabian Nights," than to find a place in Christian literature. Still, all this extravagancy does not turn us away from the *true glory* of the millennium, but it rather makes us the more anxious to sift to the very bottom, to know and to hold fast the truth as revealed in the Book of God, that our aspirations and our hopes may be so guided as to have real fellowship with Christ in the aims and intentions of His gospel.

(1) These are the words of Papias, the father of pre-millennialism.

And now, in conclusion, if any critic shall think me wanting in scripture quotation this evening, I would remind such, that all I have said is so much in harmony with the general tenor of the bible, and said so much in scripture language, that it was simply impossible to turn up the endless number of passages which have been, as it were, speaking to us in this lecture. If any one should consider my remarks to be wanting in freshness, that will arise very much from the fact, that the subject we have had under discussion is one with which most gospel hearers are familiar, seeing that in our *songs*, and *sermons*, and *prayers*, we are constantly led to it; yet, though an old subject, there is in it so much to cheer and animate the church of God, that we cannot study it in vain. And oh! that every hearer this evening would gather lessons from this perusal. We all find ourselves in a world of woe, and nothing but this gospel of the blessed God can remedy the evil. Men have tried all their remedies,—*philosophy*, *civilization*, and *education*,—but all have failed to conquer the monster sin, or chain the lustful passions of our nature. But Jesus comes, and His grace transforms the creature man, and

“Lions, and beasts of savage name,
Put on the nature of the lamb.”

Yet the world hates and despises His renovating truth, and substitutes forms and rites in its stead. Oh! brethren, if you want your own hearts sanctified, and your mind filled with peace, submit entirely to Him Who came to bring peace,—Who died to secure it for us,—and Who now reigns to give peace and triumph to all who believe. Believe in Him, and millennial peace will be yours now; and so far will ye antedate the golden age and will learn the truth of prophecy, that “in His day shall the righteous flourish, and abundance of peace so long as the moon endureth.” And if ye would that the world should be blessed, turn away from every form of false religion, distrust *priestcraft*, *ceremonies*, *Hierarchies*, and *State-Establishments*,—they have been tried long enough, and have brought little but *corruption*, *tyranny*, and *destruction*, where’er they

have come ; therefore, distrust them, and turn to that gospel of Jesus, as it came pure from His lips, and the lips of His inspired teachers ; and with confidence grasp it, and do all you can to carry it to the regions beyond you. Nor stand ye, like thousands of misguided men and women of our day, gazing up into heaven, expecting the Saviour to come, to convert the world by His bodily presence ! He has given you His gospel ; He has given you His Spirit ; and He has promised to be with you until the end of the world. By these, or not at all, the millennium is to come ; by these, or not at all, the latter-day glory shall be secured ; for God has no other remedy for man's woes, and no design of sending Jesus again till the final judgment. Oh ! ye churches of the true saints, know ye not what your gospel has done ? and can ye doubt it now ? Your Saviour and Lord is now seeing how ye are fulfilling His mission in the world. Let His command arouse you,—let the histories of His conquests stimulate your faith,—let the prospect of His universal glory inspire and inflame your love,—and let His unchanging promise arm you to the fight ; and thus going forth, the world shall yet see the salvation of our God, and all the ends of the earth shall fear Him. Then, amid the homage of nations to His government and law, the earth shall be gilded with the millennial glory, and angels once more be tempted to sing their celestial song,—“PEACE ON EARTH, GOODWILL TOWARD MEN ; GLORY TO GOD IN THE HIGHEST.”

The Lord hasten it in His time. Amen !





LECTURE IV.

"THE LITTLE SEASON OF SATAN'S LIBERTY."

Delivered on Sunday Evening, January 7th, 1872.

"And after that he must be loosed a little season. And when the thousand years are expired, Satan shall be loosed out of his prison, and shall go out to deceive the nations which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog and Magog, to gather them together to battle : the number of whom is as the sand of the sea. And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city : and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them."

Rev. xx. 3, 7-9.

IN giving these lectures, I am very anxious that all who hear them shall have a distinct view of the whole series of subjects discussed, but I am greatly afraid I shall not succeed in securing this end ; partly from the fact that many of our friends have paid but little attention previously to this class of study, and partly from the necessity I am under of compressing too much into each lecture. It would have been more for the profit of those who wish to examine all the bearings of the questions involved, if some of these lectures had been divided into two or three ; but the fear of protracting this

investigation too greatly, led me to confine their number to the limited space announced. If anyone should think that on some points I labor too much to be plain, it arises from my great fear that some persons may fail to catch the truths presented ; and if there has been room for this anxiety before, there is special room for it this evening, for the subject is one that very few Christians think of, or converse upon. If I had been desirous of a sensational title, I might have named the present lecture, "The resurrection of Satan and his hosts," but as I am more concerned to edify than to excite, the Apocalyptic phraseology has been retained, which, however, we shall not be able to understand unless we get right views of the scenes which precede that which is here represented. Among these are the binding of Satan, the nature of the millennium, and the character of the people who enjoy it. As perfectly as I can in a few words, let me first of all give you the *order* of these events as they occur in the visions. In attempting this, I must ask you to call to mind what was said concerning the long struggle between the Church of Christ and Satan's Seed, which struggle commenced under the rule of Pagan Rome, and has ran through the length of Papal Rome till the present time ; nor is it yet ended, nor will it be, until the whole prophetical period of the papacy shall have been completed, which, happily, we are justified in believing is now drawing to a close. That struggle will then end, not, however, by the visible appearance of our Lord, but by the complete triumph of His gospel.

The next feature of the times is the millennium (to which we drew attention last Lord's Day), which, in prophetical language, is stated to be a *thousand years*. What that period means I have not attempted to determine, though, in honesty, it must be confessed, that there is no more reason for taking this in a literal sense than there is for taking the other stated periods literally ; and, hence, if this is prophetical time, as we take the others to be,—a day for a year,—the millennium may be three hundred and sixty thousand years. But I do not insist upon this, as it might simply be in-

tended to convey the idea of a very long period, as doubtless it will be, the character of which we described in the last lecture ; in which we maintained that there will be no difference in the general nature of the church and of the world to what they are to-day, except that truth and righteousness will everywhere prevail. In turning to Daniel's visions, you will find this same period of universal righteousness set forth in two ways,—in chapter ii., as the stone cut from the mountain, and silently increasing till it has filled the whole earth with its glory, which, in the forty-fourth verse, is explained as a kingdom which the God of Heaven should set up, which should break in pieces and consume the kingdom of iron and clay. In chapter vii., the same days of happiness are explained by one of the angels to mean a fifth kingdom, which should arise after the Roman power, viz., “The saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and possess the kingdom for ever, even for ever and ever.” From these explanations, two things are certain about the millennium. First, it will immediately succeed the rule of the papacy ; and secondly, the whole world will be under its control.

The next thing in *order*, following this long season of universal peace and purity, is the loosing of Satan, and the sad decline of religion, to which we have now to turn our attention.

In the second verse of the chapter whence our text is taken, Satan is said to be laid hold of, bound, and cast into the bottomless pit, that he should deceive the nations no more for a whole millennium, after which he must be loosed a “little season.” So that after the thousand years of righteousness Satan will be once more abroad in the world, and will again deceive multitudes of men, as he has been deceiving them hitherto, and will make a final effort to destroy the church of God. He will not, however, succeed, for not only will he be hindered, but his destruction will be sudden and complete. Having thus the *order* of the events before us, we will try to understand what this last period means, and in doing so, let us examine—

I.—The nature of Satan's bondage, and the reason

for which he is bound. To see these, will help us better than anything else to know what meaning we are to attach to his loosing. I believe the majority of Christians, who are orthodox upon the general outline of these prophecies, have failed clearly to discern the intention of the language and symbols here, and hence have a wrong impression concerning the state of the world during the millennium. To correct this, I lay down the following proposition, *that the binding of Satan does not mean an entire cessation of his presence and influence in the world.* I have no doubt but some persons will feel a disappointment at this statement, but a little attention to the symbols, and the general sentiment of scripture, will show the truth of my proposition. In 2 Peter ii. 4, we are told that the sinning angels were cast down to hell, and are in chains of darkness, reserved unto judgment. Yet in 1 Peter v. 8, we learn that the devil goeth about as a roaring lion. Now it is certain from these texts that the chains by which Satan and his host are held in reserve for judgment do not at the same time prevent them working mischief in the world. But we shall find fuller illustration in the Apocalypse itself. In the ninth chapter of Revelation we have an awful representation of Satan's loosing, which will fully prove what I am saying. In the first verse of that chapter a star falls to the earth, and to him is given the key of the bottomless pit, which he opens, and at once there issues forth such a dense smoke, as to darken the sun, and in this smoke are hosts of scorpion-locusts, which plague and torment men, till they seek death rather than life. In the eleventh verse we are told of their king, who is no other than the destroying Apollyon. Now, are we to suppose that before Mahomet opened the pit of darkness, and let out his hellish lies and delusions, that the devil was not on the earth? Verily not; for in 629 A.D., when the false prophet led forth his armies in their first warfare against Christendom, Satan had already rather fully developed his great master-piece—Popery—in the the western kingdom; therefore, since the letting of Satan out of the pit does not imply that

prior to this act he had no influence in the world, the symbols before us cannot mean an entire cessation of his influence, though he be figuratively cast into the pit. In the twelfth chapter of this prophecy we have a still fuller illustration of the proposition I am submitting to you. In the seventh verse we learn that there was war in heaven : Michael and his angels fought the dragon, which is the old serpent the devil, and conquered him, and cast him out into the earth, and all the church sang songs of triumph over him. This scene, without doubt, represented the struggle that the church had with Pagan Rome, when the red dragon—the devil in the pagan dress—was cast out, and had no longer a place in the rule and government of the nation, for the whole was changed and Christianized, and the persecuting pagan form was brought to an end. But are we to suppose that when all the places of state were given to professed Christians that literally Satan was no longer in the Roman government? Certainly not. But we are rather to understand, that when the Emperor enthroned Christianity the devil's old pagan trade was cast out, and that he should no longer in that form practise his works of darkness. So here, when Satan is bound, that he shall *deceive the nations no more for a thousand years*, that power of deception which he has been practising these many generations in Christendom shall be entirely taken away, and for that period no new form of deceit shall arise amongst the children of men. In this universal withholding, we see the difference to the scene we have just described from the twelfth chapter. *There*, when he was cast out from the government and rule,—*which we are to understand by the heavens in this book*,—he went into the earth among the populace, to corrupt the world by every form of evil; but here, in the verse preceding our text, we see him cast away, so as to find no place in the earth, but is shut up in the pit of darkness for this whole period. Still, from all the symbolic representations that we have, we are justified in saying, that the binding of Satan is not an entire cessation of his presence and influence in the world during the millennium.

I think we may now venture a step further, and say, *That the binding of Satan will be no direct miracle,—* that is, it will not be done by any sovereign act of God *apart from the grace exercised by the church.* I am again afraid that some hearers will begin to feel that we are reducing the millennial glory to a very low estimate; still, at the risk of disappointing pious minds, I dare not paint an unscriptural, or a fool's paradise. It was stated last Lord's Day, that *nature* and *grace* will be the same during the millennium as now; and as there is no passage in scripture but the one before us that says a word about Satan being entirely banished from the earth, we must apprehend its meaning to be in harmony with other portions, and we find the figurative representations before us all beautifully adapted to sustain this view. No one would be so foolish as to suppose the chain to be a literal one, or that any material fetters could bind a spirit; but the figure represents that, by some means from God, the great enemy would be hindered in his deceitful work among men, so that he should not lift up another Antichrist, nor, by change of tactics, lead the church and the world away from the gospel. But we must not forget that it will be as true during the thousand years as it is to-day, "*that this is the victory that overcometh even our faith.*" When Paul was concluding his salutations to the Romans he told them, that the God of peace would bruise Satan under their feet shortly,—by which he comforted them with the full assurance, that they would get the complete victory over all their trials and oppositions. Yet we know that Satan was not destroyed by this crushing. In the great war between Michael and the dragon, to which we just now alluded, it is stated that "*he was cast into the earth.*" That is the symbol. In a verse afterward it is said, "*they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their testimony.*" That is the plain and divinely explicit interpretation. So that the great victory over the red dragon—that is, *the casting out of the devil from Rome pagan that it might be Christianized*—was no bare sovereign act of God apart from the grace of His church, but literally Satan lost his seat and rule

in Rome by the mighty triumphs of the cross. The Christians held up the Lamb slain; and their holy lives, together with their doctrines, prevailed, till the whole scene was changed. The same will be the case in the binding of Satan. The great conqueror going forth on the white horse, in chapter nineteen, is nothing more nor less than the victorious march of the gospel, treading down and conquering all opposition, and chasing every destructive delusion of the papacy, of Islamism, and all other false religions from the world; and the saints having thus got the dominion over Satan will hold it fast, so as literally to prevent him regaining a footing till the end of the reign of peace. Now this explanation perfectly accords with every part of God's Word. The conquest is Christ's; but it is the same conquest that Christ gained at Pentecost, in Rome, and in many other bright spots of our earth,—a conquest by His Spirit through the agency of His disciples. The bruising of Satan is God's; but it is God's bruising by the foot of the church. The binding of the devil is by a messenger from heaven; but it is by the faithful that this heavenly grace will perform its powers. If I have said enough to make this scriptural truth clear to you, you will at once be able to see how, during the whole of the millennium, the ground is held for Christ by the church through the abundant measure of grace given her from on high. And this at once shows us that the Apocalypse is in perfect harmony with all the precepts and commands of Christ elsewhere, which bid the faithful to go into all the world, and disciple all nations, *not by any new agency*, but by the simple gospel, which was at *first*, and which *ever will be*, the power of God unto salvation. The gospel thus sets before the church the great work that is to be done, and furnishes her with the means of doing it; the Apocalypse gives her a visionary glimpse of her work accomplished. This vision should be most stimulating to us in our own toil and warfare, as we here learn, that although the difficulties are great and numerous, we shall, by faithful service, come off more than conquerors through Him that loved us.

I would not for a moment have you to abate the ardour and glow of your aspirations toward the millenium because there is no new element in it, or because it is to be won by the church in the ordinary way of spiritual conquest. To me it seems all the more bright and glowing, that all which we described last week shall be attained by the old and ever-blessed story of Bethlehem and Calvary. Will that Divine conquest be too great for the dignity and grandeur of the means employed? It will not; nor will it be more than the gracious Author designed when He gave up His life that He might redeem the souls of men and destroy the works of the devil. When He ascended He armed His soldiers with the weapons of their warfare; the whole earth was to be the battle field, which they were to win, and all the nations to be trophies of their conquest. To assure them of success He said, "Lo, I am with you always, even to the end;" and to inspire them with confidence amid all their conscious weakness He gave them the Holy Spirit, with the promise that *He* should convince the *world* of sin, of righteousness, and of judgment. Within twelve hours after they were clad in their heavenly armour three thousand captives were bound in the chains of love to the gospel car, and soon the fame of Jesus had spread throughout all the world, and it appeared as though the battle would be both short and certain. In little more than three hundred years the heathen dragon of Rome was under the church's feet; and had the Christian church remained pure she would have held the ground taken; but she was ignorant of Satan's devices; and he, transforming himself to an angel of light, got his place among the saints, and, under a new name, retook the field, and, more or less, has held it till now. But we shall yet overcome him,—regain our lost possessions,—cast him out,—and by grace keep the ground; for, from henceforth, "when he cometh in like a flood, the Spirit of the Lord shall lift up a standard against him;" for though the conquering work has been impeded by this Antichrist, the commission is still as it was at Pentecost, with all the promise of Divine success, and the world

must yet be won. Now I ask every candid hearer, if this view is not in perfect keeping with the whole spirit of the gospel, and the tenor and precept of the Word of God ; and, further, if this millennium is not more God-like and Christ-honoring than the wild visions of pre-millenarians, who talk about Christ coming bodily and setting up a temporal throne at Jerusalem,—re-instituting the sacrifices,—sending the old prophets and saints to look after and educate the boys, teaching them trades, arts, &c.,—and Sarah, Miriam, and the female saints, to nurse and tend the babies? Which looks most like the bible, or which is most in harmony with the grace of the Spirit and the doctrines of the apostles? Brethren, let none of these unholy dreams possess you ; but grasp the old standard of the cross, and by grace carry it forward, and never falter in your onward march until you have planted it on the strongest citadel of the Prince of Darkness, and by faith, and prayer, and truth, and righteousness, have destroyed his evil work in the kingdoms of the earth, and have laid the world you were sent to conquer as a peaceful trophy at your Sovereign's feet. But, remember, that even then, though all shall own the sway of Christ, and shall be morally influenced by the gospel, Satan will not have ceased, nor have done tempting the sons of men, though he will be unable during those blessed times to rally, by his delusion, an organization against the Lord Jesus. Having in these arguments seen the nature of Satan's bondage, we shall now be able to understand his loosing. This leads me, then, to examine the next branch of my subject.

II.—The nature of Satan's release, and the result of the same on the church and the world.

This part of our investigation reveals a painful aspect of human nature, and the general tendency of even the sanctified to degenerate. In a word, it is one more illustration of the utter depravity of our hearts, and of the ready progress which sin makes in a slumbering church ; for I hold that the loosing of Satan will be no arbitrary act of God, but that just as the faithful got the conquest over this terrible foe, so the

faithless will lose their hold upon him, whereby he will regain his influence, and gather together a party against the Lord and His anointed.

(1) I remark, *the loosing of Satan will introduce no new element into the world*; but rather the evil element, which has been controlled and kept down for a thousand years, will find opportunity to work, and again to control men. Just as the church was not *really* dead during the twelve hundred and sixty years of the devil's power by Antichrist, but was rather lingering out an existence till "the first resurrection," so Satan will not be dead, nor his seed, during the one thousand years of holiness, but will linger on, tempting and annoying the individual Christian, and holding the unbeliever in bondage of "the fear of death," until the time shall come when he shall succeed once more to band his party together in open rebellion against the beloved city. And this will be his resurrection in the world, just as the triumph of the church makes the first resurrection a thousand years before, so that there will be no new or strange thing happen at his loosing; but the same old power which once ruled the world, but which for many generations will have been wasted and crushed, will again revive and grow strong, and make the last attempt for victory.

(2) I remark, that it is more than likely that the loosing of Satan *will be no sudden surprise*,—the way for his coming will be gradually prepared by the gradual decline of the church. This has always been the manner in which he has gained dominion among the professed disciples of the Lamb. The decline of the churches in Asia Minor was gradual, and the rising of the papacy in Rome was also gradual. Just as the true church let go her truth and her purity the devil's deceptions prevailed, and saints and relics took the place of Christ, and form and outward show were substituted for spiritual life. Thus men were deceived by Satan; and there is no reason to doubt but he will pursue the same method again, gilding his baits as the times may demand, and making his advances as the professed church ceases her watchfulness and

fidelity, and thereby gives up the ground to him. Now, as in the Old Testament church, and in the gospel church hitherto, and in the individual experience of God's children, this has been the general way of Satan's ascending to power, there is no reason to suppose that any new plans will be introduced in this final decline of pure religion.

(3) I remark, *Satan's hosts will be no newly-raised, or created subjects, to join in this work of opposing the cause of Christ.* Pre-millenarians—maintaining, as they do, that Christ will visibly and personally reign for a thousand years on this earth—have been driven to a variety of shifts to account for this large host of enemies at the end. According to some of these writers, the earth will have passed its burning and purifying process at the beginning of the period, and, after thus refined and made pure, will be the home for one thousand years of the glorified saints, who, in their immortalized bodies, will superintend all the affairs of our world, both educating the young, and ruling in the numerous states and kingdoms of men. Well might they be driven to vain inventions to find such a race of enemies—under these circumstances—as the vision sets forth. One author describes these foes as coming up from the slime of the earth by the influence of the sun,¹ like a pestilential swarm of vermin, which, as it seems, will, by a kind of rapid Darwinism, develop into this formidable host. What kind of slime the refined earth will have I am unable to say ; one would be ready to conclude that it would be better not to refine it if such terrible swarms may be hatched therein. But, as the bible knows nothing about this peculiar notion, we need not blush to confess our ignorance of it, nor to acknowledge our inability to grapple therewith. Another class of writers tell us, that these enemies will be the heathen nations who never heard the gospel, but whom God will raise to life at the end of the millennium, in order to give them an opportunity of fighting against Christ, that His justice might appear in condemning them.² Others believe in the raising of the wicked generally. But all

(1) Burnet. (2) Gill and others.

these are miserable inventions to escape a difficulty into which their system has driven these authors ; and not only “miserable inventions,” but such as are without the least shadow of God’s Word in their favour, and are entirely opposed to the honour of God, and to the dignity of Christ. We, on the other hand, have no difficulty either to find the people, or to account for their rebellion. We have maintained throughout these lectures that the millennial state will not be a perfect one : men will need conversion, and faith, and love, and godly fear, as now ; and as now there will be black sheep in the fold, and many will be kept under restraint by fear rather than by love. The unregenerate will as easily be led astray, and as glad to throw off the yoke of restraint, as in former times. The church, too, will decline in spiritual life and power ; the virgins will be given to slumber, and the tares will rapidly grow. The fathers and elders—who will be giants in faith during the millennium—having passed away, will be succeeded by a less vigorous race of followers, who will be too much satisfied with form without the power, and (as others in former days) will glory in the faith of ancestors, rather than in personal devotion to holiness, so that the old inspired question may be again asked, “When the Son of man cometh, shall He find faith on the earth?” In such a state of things, it will be easy to see how Satan may again deceive the nations, and induce multitudes to declare against the faith of the saints and the city of God. This Gog and Magog, whom we find introduced into the vision, carry us back to Ezekiel xxxviii. and xxxix., where an unprovoked and formidable enemy comes up to attack Israel in his peaceful settlements ; and these names are used here for *avowed enemies*, just as were those people mentioned by the prophet. The statement that these enemies are in the four quarters of the earth is a kind of figurative representation. The beloved city is here represented as located in the centre, like the tabernacle in the desert, or like Jerusalem in Palestine, and the enemies living on the outskirts, and at a distance

from it, are easily stirred up against the holy city. The *order* of Satan's progress is—first *deception*, then *open rebellion*. It would be vain to speculate very minutely upon the exact form of his last delusions; but it can scarcely be imagined that they will assume the shape of the papal Antichrist. What light we gather from the scriptures leads us rather to believe that the last opposition will be in the form of open infidelity, in which human passions will break forth in their vilest form; for Paul says,—“Yourselves know perfectly that the day of the Lord so cometh as a thief in the night; for when they shall say peace and safety, then sudden destruction cometh upon them, as travail upon a woman with child; and they shall not escape.” And Peter says,—“There shall come in the last day scoffers, walking after their own lust, and saying, Where is the promise of His coming.” So that it appears very plainly from these scriptures that the deception of Satan will be that of denying the truth, and leading men to grow bold in presumption and profanity under the power of unbelief, like the heathen form of infidelity, that said, “Let us eat and drink, for to-morrow shall be as to-day, and much more abundant.” And then shall it be as when Noah entered the ark, and as when Christ came with judgment on the city of Jerusalem. The people, as on those occasions, will be blinded by Satan, till the vengeance comes and sweeps them away, the terribleness of which is beyond our conception, for

“Woe, woe to the sinners !
 To what shall they trust
 In the day of God's vengeance,
 The Holy and Just ?
 How meet all the terrors
 That flame in His path,
 When the mountains shall melt
 At the glance of His wrath.
 The formal professor,
 The saint but in name,
 Where now will he cover
 His guilt and his shame ;
 When his sin, long concealed,
 Shall be blazoned abroad,
 And his conscience shall echo
 The sentence of God ?”

The time which shall be occupied by Satan is called here "a little season." Most likely this "little" is in comparison to the long period just mentioned—"the thousand years." In the seventh chapter of this same prophecy we have the mention of "a little season" as the period during which the souls under the altar were to rest before God would avenge their blood on the earth. Now, if that "little season" is to be understood to mean the whole time during which martyrs under papal persecution were to be slain, *as it seems to indicate*,¹ then it extends from the commencement of the papacy to the beginning of the millennium, and at least will be more than twelve centuries. We cannot, however, build any definite theory upon this, but it may serve to illustrate two points: first, that since twelve hundred and sixty years is but a little season in this book, the millennium may be very much longer than is generally expected; and secondly, that Satan's years at the end may be far from being a few.

I think we have now gone over the most of the outline of this prophecy. We have seen how, in apocalyptic language, the old serpent, the devil, has before now been overcome and cast out by the preaching of the cross, and the living testimony of the godly; from which we have argued, that his future dethronement will be in like manner. We have seen, too, that the restraint for a thousand years will be through the instrumentality of the church, who will not only defeat the Antichrist, but (as Dr. Brown has said) for that long period will "never permit the devil to gain an inch of ground to plant his foot on over the wide world." We have further seen, that the loosing of Satan will be no arbitrary act of God, but that it will come about by the decline of the Church, and the want of watchfulness on the part of the saints, who will slumber whilst the busy enemy will be doing his work of destruction.

The great question which will here present itself to most minds is this, "How can those things be?" Can the gospel bring about a state of things worthy of

(1) See page 32.

these strong figures? and, if so, can that world ever after such happiness and holiness thus sadly decline? Happily, and unhappily, we have abundant illustration to favour an affirmative reply to both of these questions. In the first years of Christianity it was charged with turning the world upside down, and it is as full of energy now as then. What thousands of hearts and homes it has completely changed; from the dens of vice and darkness Satan has been cast out; and though, like a lion, he has growled at the door, yet faith and prayer have chained him outside, and thereby the goods have been kept in peace. And, on larger scales, what towns and villages the gospel has regenerated, and has not failed to sway the mightiest empires on earth. Richard Baxter gives us a glowing description of the gospel in Kidderminster, when the godless clergy of James I. and Charles I. were purged out, and the ministers of Christ had freedom to preach the living word. All kinds of vice and immorality hid their heads; every house rang with the songs of Zion; and the whole town lived under the controlling sway of truth. Nor was that an isolated case. Others so much resembled it, that not a few enthusiasts believed and proclaimed the millennial reign. The same effects, in less exciting times, have occurred under our own notice, and scenes of revelling and sin have given way to the power of Christian light and purity. But perhaps one of the best accounts of such marvellous effects of the gospel is given by President Edwards of his town,—Northampton, in New England. Referring to a gracious revival of religion there he says:

“Presently, upon this, a great and earnest concern about the things of religion and the eternal world became universal in all parts of the town, and among persons of all degrees and ages. The noise among the dry bones waxed louder and louder; all other talk, but about spiritual and eternal things, was soon thrown by; the only thing in their view was to get the kingdom of heaven, and everyone appeared pressing into it. The eagerness of their hearts in this great concern could not be hid;—it appeared in their very counten-

naces. The work of conversion was carried on in a most astonishing manner. Souls did, as it were, come by flocks to Jesus Christ, so that in the spring of 1735 *the town seemed to be full of the presence of God*. There were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house. The goings of God were then seen in His sanctuary; God's day was a delight, and His Tabernacles were amiable; our public assemblies were then beautiful, and the congregations were alive in God's service. In all companies, on other days, Christ was to be heard and seen in the midst of them; our young people, when they met, were wont to spend the time in talking of the excellency and dying love of Jesus Christ,—the gloriousness of the way of salvation,—the wonderful, free, and sovereign grace of God,—and the truth and certainty of the great things of His Word.Those amongst us that had been formerly converted, were greatly enlivened and renewed by fresh and extraordinary visitations of the Spirit of God.... The work in this town, and some others about us, has been extraordinary, on account of the universality of it, affecting all sorts of persons—sober and vicious—high and low—rich and poor—wise and unwise....A loose, careless person could scarcely find another in the whole neighbourhood; and if there was any one that seemed to remain senseless or unconcerned, it would be spoken of as a strange thing.”¹

The gospel, by the power of the Holy Ghost, did all this; and let such a scene be renewed, not only in New England, but in Old England and throughout the world, and there will be no further dispute about the binding of Satan, or the victory of Christ over him. For as Hengstenberg says on this subject of the binding of Satan, “What is said of the operations of Christ, even now repeats itself anew in the case of every individual who stands in faith, watches, and prays. ‘Resist the devil, and he will flee from you.’ *If the earth were to watch and pray for a thousand years, Satan should have nothing on it.*”

It is then, dear hearers, within the power of the church, by the grace of God, to bind the old dragon,

(1) Pres. Edwards' “Faithful Narrative,” pp. 14-20, vol. III.; complete works.

and cast him down, and thereby to usher in the blessed days of heaven on earth.

Unhappily, in the next place, we have full proof of the possibility of *decline* after such bright days of peace and righteousness. If it were possible to draw aside original innocence into the meshes of Satan, it will be no wonder if fallen humanity in any earthly condition gives way. The ardent love of the Ephesians, which filled Paul with such thanksgiving, declined within a few years, and the candlestick was removed out of its place. The bright vision at Northampton had an end, and the great and good Edwards lived long enough to see sad discord and strife, and even to be driven from the once peaceful paradise of his labour. The unregenerated outside of the church, who had been held spell-bound for a season, returned to their former habits when the day of visitation had passed away; and the unsanctified in the church, who had taken excitement for grace, were a source of spiritual weakness and worldly power; and hence, when the excitement was gone, and the church had become less watchful and faithful, the enemy had an easy time of it in bringing about a painful state of discord and trouble.¹ And you too, Christian, who more than once have got the chain upon your foe, and have cast him out, have by your own sins and failings, repeatedly cut the chain and let him loose upon yourself; and when the like conduct shall be pursued by the universal church, Satan shall be loosed for "a little season." There is, therefore, nothing beyond the reign of grace, and the experience of the church in the binding and loosing of the dragon, in this wonderful vision before us.

It only now remains for me to make some personal use of the whole, and

(1) We have a frightful lesson of the terribleness of Satan's character and work in the world. A list of his devices would make heaven weep and earth tremble. He turned Paradise into tears, and man into a demon. He has led the world a captive in chains, and triumphed over its groaning and blood. He has set all nations against God, and has Deified himself in ten thousand

(1) Hopkins' "Life of Edwards," pp. 55, 56, vol. I. complete works.

forms. He breathed the black smoke of Mahomed, wielded the persecuting sword of the pagan, and kindled the fires of papal Rome. He tried to kill the Infant Saviour ; but failing in the attempt, he offered Him the world for a moment's adoration. He used every effort to corrupt the Pure Fountain of our glorious redemption ; but not succeeding, he has poured out his impurities upon its life-giving streams. He aimed his shaft at the Head of the church ; but missing his mark, he has been firing ever since at the members of the body ; and there has been no spot whither they have come, but there he also has gained a footing to hinder their work. But he must not always triumph ! Defeated by our glorious Captain in the wilderness and in the tomb, he shall be defeated and abashed by the weakest of His saints. Yet let us not be ignorant or unmindful of his wicked devices. There is no crevice but he is ready to rush through to break in upon us, and no heart but he fain would worry ; therefore, "*be vigilant, be sober*, for your adversary the devil goeth about as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour."

(2) Let me remark, we have the only means of conquest in the blood of the Lamb. The doctrine of the cross is the chief object of his malicious rage. Defeated by it at the first, he never can withstand its power. As surely as our Divine Lord came to destroy the work of the devil, so surely shall all His members obtain the victory by faith in Him. They have tried it, and Judaism quailed at the beginning, and shall yet finally yield to its power. They tried it, and pagan Europe bowed to its sway, and the red dragon lost his seat. Luther and the Reformers tried it, and all the kingdoms of the beast shook and trembled, and many of them fell to the earth. The faithful are trying it now, and every day some new trophy is made for Christ, and some wound from the adversary Apollyon is effectually healed. We shall go on trying it, till its healing virtues shall turn our lazar-house of suffering into a world of praise, and the spiritual desert into the garden of the Lord. O ye children of God, never forget, "they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb." Does he accuse

you? The blood shall wash away the leperous stain to which he points! Does he tempt you? Hide behind the cross, and no shafts can hit you there. Are you already wounded? Resort to this sovereign balm! and your pain shall be assuaged, and your lost strength be once more regained. Have you been defeated in your work? Try again this never-failing weapon, and souls shall bow before it, and the weak and the weeping shall soon rejoice. Be persuaded at all times, and under all circumstances, that your great foe can never be quelled by any other means, and that your daily and hourly standing as Christians can only be one of peace and prosperity as you keep your ground by this powerful weapon!

And as for those of my hearers who are still led captive by this prince of the powers of the air, oh! dear hearers, could you but see the fiend that is guiding your steps,—could you remember the havoc he has made,—could you but realize the object at which he aims in you, viz., your eternal destruction,—would you not at once throw off his slavish yoke, and break loose from his terrible grasp? Ah! perhaps you have purposed, and vowed, but have failed again and again; yes, and ever must fail, until you overcome him by faith in Jesus,—that is, until you conquer him through the blood of the Lamb.

“His cross a sinking world upholds,
Its power subdues *death, hell*, and sin;
High heaven’s bright gates it wide unfolds,
And ushers happy millions in.

Thou precious Cross! oh! may my heart
Feel Thine attractive power,
“Amid the flattering smiles of earth,
And in hell’s fiercest hour.

And when around Death’s well-strung bow
My feeble heart-strings play,
Thou bleeding Cross! Thou dying Lamb!
Be Thou my only stay.”

But whilst some here shall be thinking of the triumphs of faith over this ruthless foe, let not the careless forget the end of those who are deluded by him to

the last,—“Fire came down from God out of heaven and devoured them.” Then—oh ! surely—there is no escape for the rebel host, however numerous or strong they may be, for the hour cometh when

“No more shall atheist mock His long delay ;
His vengeance sleeps no more : behold the day !
Behold the Judge descends ! His guards are nigh,
Tempests and fire attend Him down the sky.
When God appears, all nations shall adore Him ;
While sinners tremble, saints rejoice before Him.”

And now, fellow Christians, as we take our places once more around the table of the Lord,¹ let us again unite to admire the grace by which we have been delivered from Satan’s kingdom, and brought into the kingdom of God’s dear Son ; and let us never forget, that Calvary is our only tower of safety and defence. Leave this city of refuge, and the fierce avenger will smite us down with hellish triumph. Close shelter here, and then, though Satan may be at large, and for a season may be rejoicing in his mastery over others, we shall be still safe, for not even the gates of hell shall prevail against us.

(1) This lecture was delivered on the evening of Communion.





LECTURE V.

“THE RESURRECTION.”

Delivered Lord's Day, January 14, 1872.

“Marvel not at this : for the hour is coming, in the which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth ; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life ; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of damnation.”—John v. 28, 29.

THE doctrine of the resurrection is one of the most grand and glorious doctrines of the gospel of Christ ; and so important a place does it fill in the gospel scheme, that Paul takes it as the fundamental truth upon which all others rest. For he says, “If the dead rise not, then is not Christ raised ; and if Christ be not raised, your faith is vain ; ye are yet in your sins.” Thus, this great apostle was willing to risk the whole gospel—with all its blessedness in this life, and its anticipated joys in the life to come—upon the resurrection of the body from the dead ; for if one was a delusion, so was the other. Therefore, if there was no resurrection, Christ was not risen, his preaching was vain, faith was vain, and they also who have fallen asleep in Christ have perished.

With these strong views of this doctrine, it was no wonder that the first preachers of the gospel so strenu-

ously and constantly maintained it in all their discourses. Nor was it surprising that the great enemy of souls should aim some of his earliest shafts at this vital question. It was well for the church that he did this before the day of inspiration closed, as probably the fifteenth chapter to the Corinthians, with all its charming blessedness and unanswerable argument, owes its existence to that opposition.

Happily I am not called upon this evening to defend the abstract doctrine of the resurrection, as both classes of millenarians equally "believe in the resurrection of the dead;" therefore, it would be altogether out of place here to give any account of the disbelief which, from time to time, has manifested itself in Christendom concerning this truth. But the great question at issue between us is this, "*When, and in what order, will the righteous and wicked rise?*" We can no sooner present this question than we are compelled to enter the strife between our brethren and ourselves, for their answers are altogether irreconcilable with ours and with the Word of God.

They maintain that the righteous—who will have been converted before the Lord's coming—will rise a thousand years before the wicked, and that during that time, in some way or other, they will dwell here on the earth, or in a city just over the earth, and communicating with it by a kind of Jacob's ladder, and in their risen and immortal bodies will be in constant communication with the Jews, and the nations which Christ will have spared at His coming and the burning of the world.

We, on the other hand, say that no one will rise from the dead till the last day, when the righteous and wicked will be raised together, and immediately be summoned to the final judgment.

Now the simplest mind in this congregation will at once see that the contention between us is no small matter, but is one of the deepest moment, and, we maintain, is one that every Christian ought to hold distinct and intelligent views upon; therefore, we can have no sympathy with any one's indifference or in-

attention to the subjects we are just now discussing. Indeed, to us it is beyond all conception how any *intelligent* Christian can be indifferent to them.

Having, for many years, been deeply concerned to know the mind of the Spirit upon these questions, I have often mourned over the rapid spread of the heresies of pre-millennialism, and have sometimes tried to arouse the concern of my brethren to the danger connected therewith. But as no one during the past fifteen or sixteen years has lifted up an open banner in Brighton against these wild dreams, I have felt it my duty to God, and to His Church, to do so now; and I ask you all solemnly to weigh the whole series of truths, and not think, as many do, that it matters not which side we take, for be assured that both sides cannot be true; therefore, if one is of God, the other is not of Him.

My work this evening will be to show that the pre-millennial view upon the resurrection of the dead has not only no scripture to support it, but that it is directly opposed to its plainest teachings, and that the old and generally received belief is the *only one* in harmony with the Divine Spirit. If any one should think my propositions dogmatic, I am ready to admit the charge, and to say, further, that I intended them to be so, that no one might misunderstand my meaning.

If I can establish the truth, *that the resurrection of all parties will take place together*, all the vagaries of pre-millennarians will be completely overthrown; and this I shall now do, by several propositions, which no argument will ever overturn or destroy.

I.—THE RIGHTEOUS WILL NOT BE RAISED A SINGLE DAY BEFORE THE WICKED, FOR ALL THE DEAD IN CHRIST WILL BE RAISED AT THE LAST DAY. In the sixth chapter of the gospel by John, our Divine Lord puts this proposition beyond all dispute. Four times, within the range of twenty-five verses, does the Infallible Teacher declare that He will raise up *His own* on that given day. Now I believe that there is not a single mind in all Christendom which would come to

any other conclusion than ours upon these passages, unless it had previously been warped by an unnatural system. Nor will the hackneyed phrase, which is generally the last covert of the modern prophets, avail them here, (I allude to the oft-repeated, and, in many instances, the ludicrous sentence, which you find in all Plymouth Brother and pre-millenarian works.)—" *See the Greek.*" Could the Greek help the cause of these advocates, we might expect Dean Alford to give them the advantage. But no ! His translation fixes the resurrection of the saints to the last day as firmly as does our common version. Even pre-millennial writers, who for a moment forget their theory, admit the plain meaning of the texts in question. Dr. Gill—who believed in the personal reign—says on this oft-repeated promise, "'I will raise him up at the last day.' This will be at the last of the last days—at the end of all things ; and is mentioned," he continues, "to show *that length of time* will not hinder the resurrection of the dead." Now, with solemn earnestness, and Christian affection, I ask every reasonable disciple of Jesus, if there can be a thousand years after the last day ? Yea, I ask more,—If the righteous were intended to be raised one thousand years before the wicked, *would*, or *could*, our glorious Redeemer have uttered these words ? With gravity and reverence, I answer, He would *not*,—He *could not*. Then, in all honesty, whatever may be the disappointment,—whatever the sacrifice of fond theories,—or whatever the plausible gloss of deluded guides, each follower of Christ ought at once to abandon every notion which is opposed to this immovable doctrine of our Lord and Master. For if it is certain—and indeed it is so—that the righteous will be raised from the dead *at the end of all time*,—on the *very last day of it*,—there cannot be another day of time after that, and hence there can be no *millennium*, or "*little season*," or any day of resurrection for the wicked after these arise from the dead. This conclusion is so divine and inspired, that the inspiration of the passages must be questioned before the conclusion can be altered. I therefore entreat my hearers not to resist

this evidence, but to make all symbol and figure to bend to it; otherwise, they will be found to fight against God.

II.—NONE OF THE RIGHTEOUS WILL BE RAISED UNTIL CONVERSION WORK IS ENDED; FOR ALL THAT ARE CHRIST'S WILL BE MADE ALIVE AT HIS COMING. It will not be necessary for me to make any distinction here between those whose bodies will be raised and those who will be living and be changed, for they all will be made immortal at that day,—that is, all the sons of men, that ever will have any interest in Christ, will be immortalized at His appearing. This may appear a bare truism to those not initiated into this controversy, but to others it will suggest an important distinction. The position of pre-millenarians is this. They maintain that the resurrection of the righteous will take place before the millennium; and that, during that long period, the nations will be converted to God, under the personal reign of Christ on the earth, and the ministry of immortal saints; so that the larger number of Christ's redeemed ones will, upon this theory, not only not be raised at His coming, but will not even be born—much less be converted—at that time. There are, therefore, two grave difficulties here. First, the theory leaves no room for the resurrection of millennial converts, so that the myriads of saints who, during that time, shall live, believe on Christ, and die, will have no resurrection from the grave whatever; indeed, the writers on that side are utterly at a loss to know how these are to get glorified at all. But there is the graver objection embodied in my proposition, viz., that all that are Christ's must be made alive at His coming. In the fifteenth chapter to the Corinthians, and at the twenty-second and twenty-third verses, we are taught, as plainly as words can teach us, that all that are His will then put on immortality. The apostle is here showing the comparison between Adam and Christ as federal Heads, "for as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." That is, as all Adam's seed died in him, so all Christ's seed shall be made

alive in Him. But the question may naturally arise, — *When?* That question Paul anticipates, and answers in the twenty-third verse, “But every man in his own order: Christ the firstfruits; afterward they that are Christ’s at His coming.” As long, then, as language has any meaning, the Church of Christ will be taught here, that, as surely as all men died in Adam, and as surely as Christ was raised up from the dead, so surely every single member of Christ’s seed will be absolutely and eternally freed from death at the moment when He shall come. Therefore it is certain that there will be no single soul converted after His coming, and no single member of His family missing from the glorious scenes of that resurrection; for every one of them shall *then* be made alive. The incoherent and baseless notion that the *Church—that is, all believers gathered out before the millennium*—stand in a different relation to Christ to those who will be converted during the thousand years, has not a shadow of evidence in God’s Word, and cannot help this monstrous error out of its difficulty. I have been repeatedly told by the defenders of these doctrines, that the church which is now being gathered is to make up the Bride, and that those converted after this dispensation will be the children of the Church. All I have to say to this confusion of ideas is this:—The New Testament knows nothing of any distinctions in Christ,—neither *Jew nor Greek, bond nor free, male nor female*. All who ever will *see the Son, believe on the Son, or have been given to the Son*, are equally dear to Him; and every one of them will find a place in His body, the Church; and all together will constitute His Bride, and at His coming, *or never*, every ONE such will be perfected. Therefore, there can be no resurrection of the righteous until all the elect are gathered in, for our Lord positively says in the texts just quoted, that He will raise *every one of them* up on the SAME day.

III.—THERE WILL BE NO RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE THE END OF ALL THINGS, FOR THE RIGHTEOUS ARE TO BE CHANGED, OR RAISED,

AT THE LAST TRUMP. In the fifty-first and fifty-second verses of the fifteenth chapter to the Corinthians the apostle says, "Behold, I show you a mystery; We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the LAST TRUMP: for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed." Now I believe that the unanimous voice of the Church has ever been, till very lately, in favour of the belief, that the resurrection will be ushered in by some thrilling and terrible noise,—Paul calls it the sound of the trumpet in the present text. In his first epistle to Thessalonians, fourth chapter and sixteenth verse, he calls it the shout of the Lord,—the voice of the archangel,—and the trump of God. And Peter calls it a great noise, whilst our Lord speaks of it as the "voice" of the "Son of man." It is not necessary that we should stop to discuss what kind of a sound that alarm shall be. We do not imagine that any literal trumpet will be needed, though the sound may assume that character, as it did amid the awful scenes of Mount Sinai. All that is required is, that there shall be such an alarm as shall fill every human ear, and accompanied by such a divine power as to awake even the dead. Now, whatever that may be, whether the thunders of the elements shall be engaged or not, we cannot tell; but this we *know*, that whatever it may be, the righteous will be raised from their slumbers by it, nor will it be repeated to raise the wicked, for this will be the LAST TRUMP, that is, it will be the *last summons* by which God will call men from the grave; therefore, no one will be raised from the dead after the righteous. How does this grand and inexpressible scene fit with the arrogant and vain assertions of pre-millenarians. Take an author¹ (quoted by Mr. Baxter, who, together with a phalanx of pre-millennial advocates, has so often held forth in this town, and whose books have sold by thousands.) He says, "Let us not forget the important words, '*I come as a thief.*' The object of a thief is to steal suddenly and secretly. Suddenly and secretly the Lord will descend into the

(1) The author of "The Last Vials."

air from the highest heavens,...from that distance He will send forth His summons to the living saints and to the dead....He will *steal* the Church away both suddenly and secretly....When the morning comes, tens of thousands will be missing—vanished altogether, without leaving a trace behind. The disappearance of the Church will occupy every mind; the public journals will be filled with intelligence of this miraculous vanishing of thousands. Error, misunderstanding, and dismay, will fill the hearts of those who are left behind; yet a glimmering suspicion of the real fact will arise in a few. No doubt the removal of the Church will be a most powerful means for awakening those who constitute the woman's seed. No exhortation, no miracle, has ever been so effectual as the rapture of the living saints will prove, in turning the hearts of the disobedient to the wisdom of the just."¹ As I read this paragraph I am led to wonder whence the writer could have gathered his ideas, or whether he had ever studied the same bible as that I read. The whole of this representation is not only a burlesque upon the solemn scenes of the great day of the Lord's coming, but it contradicts it in almost every point. When the Lord shall come, and the last trump shall sound, and the archangel's voice shall thrill every heart, changing the living and raising the dead, will there be any *secrecy* in the matter, and will editors and compositors keep at their writing and setting-up of type while the heavens shall wrap together as a scroll, and the earth quake and stagger to and fro as a drunken man? And will it be a time for conversion when the Lord the Redeemer shall have left His mediatorial throne? Nay, my dear hearers, never. Then the present state of things shall be at an end, and he that is unjust shall remain unjust for ever. The last hour of time will have struck, and eternity, with all its unutterable solemnities, will be ushered in. No one will be in doubt of the facts before him, and the foolish will find no time nor opportunity to secure a drop of oil, or to trim a worthless lamp.

(1) *Via* pp. 10 and 11, "The Coming Battle."

The same writer that I have just quoted calls in question the changing of some even of the living saints at the coming of the Lord. He says, "Can those who obstinately deny...the personal reign, expect to have a share in its glories, without first passing through the great tribulation?...That such men preach the true gospel we utterly deny....They preach only half a gospel, and only half a Christ....We must doubt whether they shall have any part in the first rapture."¹ Brethren, this is a heavy charge, and a bold conclusion. But we are not moved by either. The gospel we have preached unto you is that by which ye shall be saved by, if ye believe it. Christ and Him crucified is the theme you hear, and you shall find Him no half Christ, though we preach none of those wild visions which Satan and foolish minds have concocted concerning a supposed coming which will never be. The coming of which we tell you is this :—The Lord Himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God ; and then every dead body will arise, and every living one be changed in a moment, and not one of Christ's redeemed flock shall be left behind. And you, who keep in mind what we have preached unto you, shall hail with joy the great appearing of God and our Saviour, despite all these false prophets may say. We readily admit that we are verily imperfect ; but we hide our guilty heads beneath the sheltering wings of Jesus, and, with humility and reverence, we bow to the teachings of His Holy Word ; and, with faith and hope, look forward to His coming, when He shall change our vile body, and fashion it like unto His own glorious body. And it ill becomes poor, deluded, mortal men, —who have started theories more in harmony with the Koran than the truth of God,—to place their mad reveries between us and our glorious hope, and to threaten us—because we believe not their delusions—with being left behind when the righteous Lord shall gather His ransomed to Himself. Still, we are not alarmed by their threats, though we pity their folly.

(1) *Via* p. 10, "The Coming Battle."

They have not the keys of the Kingdom; we, therefore, appeal against their decision to our Sovereign Lord, and are certain that, until He has recalled the bible, or until the revelation we *have* has been proved a fabrication of falsehoods, the righteous will not arise from the dead till the last day,—nor till the last vessel of mercy has been brought to the Saviour's feet,—nor till the last trump of God shall sound, at which moment the eternal destiny of every son of Adam will be decided beyond the possibility of a change; and whosoever denies these solemn facts, denies the teaching of the infallible Word of the living God.

IV.—THERE WILL BE NO RESURRECTION OF THE RIGHTEOUS BEFORE THE RESURRECTION OF THE WICKED, FOR BOTH PARTIES WILL RISE TOGETHER. I believe some *post*-millenarians have expressed an opinion, that probably the righteous will come forth first, and that the wicked will then immediately follow. But for even this distinction there is no foundation in the Word of God.

In our text we hear the Saviour saying, "Marvel not at this: for an hour cometh, in which all that are in the graves shall hear His voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, unto the resurrection of judgment." I quote this passage from Dean Alford's version that we may be sure that there is no escape in an appeal to the Greek. Here, then, the parties named, both come forth together, for they hear the voice together, at the same time. I am aware that, in the twenty-fifth verse, the whole gospel period is spoken of as "*an hour*," in which sinners, dead in sin, shall hear the voice of Christ and live. But this will not help the theory of two resurrections; for the dead will hear the *one voice*, which, as we have seen, is the last trump of God. During the *gospel hour* the voice of Christ is heard in every gospel sermon, in every whisper of the Holy Ghost, and here the voice continues to speak throughout the whole period. In the resurrection hour the voice will be heard, *but it will not be a long blast of a*

thousand years, nor will it sound at the beginning, and again at the end, for it will be *one* shout, the *last trump*, which will awake the dead ; and as it will be *but one*, the parties will both hear it, and *both* come forth at the same time, some to everlasting life, and some to everlasting shame and contempt. It would be much easier to argue—if one party *must* rise before the other—that the wicked would be first, for the resurrection of the righteous is so inseparable from the *last trump*, and the *last day*, that it is utterly impossible to give them the least priority. But I doubt not but some of you will still be thinking of those passages which speak of the “first resurrection,” the “resurrection of the just,” and “the dead in Christ shall rise first.” Let me say, however, that all these passages together do not even imply that one party of the dead will rise *before* the other, which will be seen as we examine them. I need not, I hope, spend much time on the first of these—Revelation xx., 5, “This is the first resurrection ;” for I have showed you more than once during these lectures that that passage does not refer to the resurrection of the dead at all, but is figurative language, setting forth the rising of the Church of Christ in power and influence in the world, when, according to Daniel, the saints of the Most High shall take the kingdom, and reign for a thousand years, at the end of which time, Satan shall rise again in influence for a “little season ;” both of which (the millennium and little season) will be before a single dead body will be raised from the grave. This literal resurrection, which we are now discussing, comes in afterwards, in the twelfth and thirteenth verses, where the sea and the grave deliver up their prey, and all the righteous and the wicked stand together before the judgment-throne, to receive every man according to the deeds done in his body, whether good or bad. Here will be seen, by every honest eye, the general resurrection both of those in the Lamb’s book of life, and of those who will be cast into the second death. And I may say that no other opinion has been held upon this part of the chapter,

except by those whose system would not permit them to receive its plain teaching. Some pre-millenarians are honest enough to confess that this twentieth chapter of Revelation is the only text upon which the doctrine of a prior resurrection of the righteous can fairly rest; and that if this one passage should be taken away, the theory must go with it. I think every unbiassed mind will see that all the plain statements of God's word are utterly opposed to any but a *figurative* meaning to that scripture, and that no other rule of interpretation can consist with the representations given. And we may feel assured, that if it had been the design of the Holy Ghost to teach the doctrine in question, He would not only have made the *one passage* a plain one, but would have taught no contradictory doctrine in other parts of His revealed will. Since, therefore, the whole scriptures demand the world-wide triumphs of the gospel by the spiritual church (such as are fairly set forth by the symbols here), and since all the scriptures are dead against any literal interpretation of these symbols, we may confidently assert that there is no literal resurrection taught in these verses.

We come now to 'Thessalonians, first epistle, fourth chapter and sixteenth verse, "The dead in Christ shall rise first." This passage is flippantly used by unwise advocates of a prior resurrection, as though it put the matter beyond dispute, whereas it does not say a syllable about it. The idea of two resurrections is nowhere to be found in the text, indeed the wicked are not mentioned in the paragraph. The two things spoken of are these, *The ascending of the living saints to meet the Lord*, and *the rising of the dead ones from their graves*; and the way in which the passage came about was thus:—the believers at Thessalonica had lost some of their friends by death, and were in trouble concerning them, fearing that they would be at a disadvantage when the Lord should come, *for by some means these believers had been misled, and had been imagining that the day of the Lord was at hand*. Paul tries to correct both wrongs in his epistles to them.

In the present text he tries to comfort them concerning their dead ; and he does this by giving them two assurances : first, that all who sleep in Jesus, God will bring with Him ; secondly, that their bodies will be raised up before the living ones shall ascend, for "we which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent—that is, go before—they which are asleep," for he further adds, "the dead in Christ shall rise first ;"¹ so that there is not the shadow of evidence here that the righteous dead will rise before the wicked, but simply that they will rise before the transformation and ascending of the living saints to meet the Lord in the air.

But there is one other class of texts to which great importance is attached by our opponents, such, for instance, as Luke xiv., 13, 14, "But when thou makest a feast, call the poor, the maimed, the lame, the blind, and thou shalt be blessed ; for they cannot recompense thee : for thou shalt be recompensed at the resurrection of the just." Now we ask, What has this to do with time ? Is priority the grand recompense which Jesus holds out ? We answer, "No !" for He elsewhere teaches that the wicked and righteous shall rise together ! What, then, can be the recompense ? Will it not be in the privileges and honours then conferred upon the righteous ? The just will rise to everlasting life, and to hear the "Well done, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord ;" and will not that be a recompense, far beyond the bare rising a few (or even many) years before the wicked ? To this question I believe the whole Church will be ready to give an affirmative reply. There is nothing here, then, to demand, or to favour, a prior resurrection for the godly, and nothing to lead them to expect it.

Before I pass away from this branch of our subject I ought, perhaps, to quote Philippians iii., 11, "If by any means I might attain to the resurrection of the dead." And, also, Luke xx., 35, "But they which

(1) It is just to admit that most pre-millennial writers acknowledge this to be the meaning of the passage. Even the author of "The Last Vials," page 12, vol. I., gives this meaning. It is, therefore, to be lamented that anyone should now contend otherwise.

shall be accounted to obtain that world, and the resurrection from the dead." From these passages it is argued that the general resurrection cannot be meant, but that some other must be intended—some resurrection peculiar to the righteous; and much stress is laid upon the formula, "*from the dead*," and "*from among the dead*;" the design of which argument is to show that the persons spoken of will come forth, leaving the dead—that is, the wicked dead—behind in the grave. But these arguments are without any foundation, and the best critics have shown that they are useless in the controversy. And what is very decisive on this point is the fact, that when Paul was speaking exclusively of the resurrection of those in Christ, in the fifteenth chapter to the Corinthians, in every place he used the formula "*of the dead*," and not "*from the dead*." All, therefore, that can be made of "*from the dead*" is "*from death*," and has no reference to leaving others behind, or bringing them with us, but simply resurrection "*from death*," in which form the words are translated in the ancient English versions."¹ Was it then a common resurrection which Paul strove to attain,—*barely* and *simply* the resurrection of the body? Certainly not! far from this, for all men will bodily rise without any striving for it. What then could it be? Dear hearer, will there not be a mighty difference between rising from the grave and rising in the *likeness of Christ*? That will indeed be rising "*from death*" to die no more, and to aim at this was worthy of the highest aspirations of even Paul, who, counting not that he had apprehended, but had left the things that were behind, and was pressing forward toward the mark of his high calling of God in Christ Jesus, that he might fully realize all the blessedness of being in Him, and like Him, for ever.

I think I have now taken up enough of your time with the controversy before us. I have accepted the text as an infallible guide, which, in connection with other texts, has led us to the immovable conclusion, that there will be no two resurrections as to time,

(1) Waldegrave, 576 (vi). See also Brown, pp. 182-7.

but that both righteous and wicked will be raised together at the last day, and at the sound of the last trump—the trump of God, at which moment the whole body of Christ will be rendered complete, and all the affairs of time be finally and eternally brought to a close.

It remains for me now to try to improve the whole. But where can I begin? It is so overwhelming, so vast, so unlike anything that we have ever yet seen or heard. We have heard the thunders roll, and we have seen the lightning flash, as leaden clouds have hung like the pall of night over us, and all nature has stood trembling beneath the majestic scene. But what are all past storms and tempests in comparison to that awful moment, when suddenly His sounding chariot shall shake the sky, and the thrilling blast of the archangel shall pierce every tomb, and reach to the deepest caverns of the dead; when monuments of costly marble and granite shall crumble to pieces, and every sepulchre shall be empty and gaping wide; when the before inanimate earth shall become like a living, moving sea, as the millions of Adam's sons come forth from its bosom; when every field and valley and mountain top shall present their long-held tenants to the Lord, when the millions who have been slain in war, and hurried together to an untimely grave, shall stand upon their feet, and when the mighty ocean shall be covered with its now-engulphed multitudes, and all shall wait the bidding of their Sovereign on the clouds to stand before His dreadful bar?

What, I ask, are all our conceptions to those terrible realities which shall then await us?—when earth and heaven shall unite to unfold every secret, and each rock and mountain shall refuse to shelter a single soul; when every heart and every thought shall lie exposed to the glance of the visible Judge; and when every conscience shall be a faithful witness in that final assize. That wonderful day is better conceived than explained, and is fitter for solemn meditation than public discourse; still, duty calls me to say a word or two upon it, in its relation to ourselves, and

(1) The solemnities of that day *concern us all*. Every member of our race will be connected therewith ! The ages of the past, the ages that are, and the ages that are to come, will all share the awful grandeur of that day. The venerable sire who went to the grave with fleecy locks of age, and the babe who only just peeped into our world to retire from it; the man, ripe with intelligence and full of all knowledge, and the infant who never gained a consciousness here; the loving Christian who lived for God and for Christ, and the scowling sceptic who scorned his Maker and despised His Law,—they all will be there. The martyrs, too, whose ashes have been scattered to the winds or strewed upon the waters, and the bitter tyrants, who mocked their pains and gloated over their blood, they all will be there ! Oh, what a terrible meeting ! The accusers and the accused, the oppressors and the slaves, the guilty and the avenger will all be there ! But most of all, *we shall be there*. Long may our dust sleep in yon grave-yard, and our names be forgotten by all on the earth, yet we shall be there; and though thousands of years may pass away ere the trumpet shall sound, it will be but as a night to us, and then we all shall meet again. One by one we may melt away from this assembly, and our places be occupied by other worshippers, but we shall surely meet again. Yes, though these ears be long closed in the deafness of death, we shall *then* all hear the summons of God, and hearing shall obey. You who have heard that voice here, and with faith and fear have responded thereto, and you who have paid a deaf ear alike to the warnings and entreaties of mercy and love, you all will hear then. The preacher who has watched for your souls, and you whom he has sought to save, will be there. The teacher who has striven to lead the young to the Cross, and the scholars who have too often heard but in vain, will be there. Oh, what a meeting ! and what a trumpet blast will that be which shall call us together ! and how different will be its effect upon the multitudes that shall hear !

“ Horrors, past imagination,
Will surprise the trembling heart ; ”

whilst the sincere disciples of Jesus will meekly say amid the crash of nature and the fright of sinners, "Lo, this is our God, we have waited for Him." But

(2) How suggestive is this imposing scene of the power and glory of Christ! By what mighty hand, or omnipotent word, shall all these things be? How cheering is the reply! They shall all be accomplished by the voice of the "Son of man." Yes, by that voice, whose first human accents were heard beneath the humble roof of a stable in Bethlehem, and amid the weakness of infancy, and, perhaps, of pain; the voice which astonished the doctors of the law, and whose withering authority drove the buyers and sellers from the Father's House; the voice that asked water of the daughter of Samaria, and bade the widow of Nain dry her tears; the voice that awoke Lazarus from the dead, and hushed the tempest on the lake of Galilee. But more! the voice that made supplication to God amid strong crying and tears in Gethsemane, and the voice whose "It is finished" has already rent the rocks and opened the graves of the dead. Yea, that is the voice which all nature shall honour, and all the heavens shall obey. Ye Jews, well might ye declare, "Never man spake like this Man;" and thou, Centurion, wast just in exclaiming—"This is the Son of God;" and ye keepers of the sepulchre did well to tremble, for the mighty Conqueror of death passed near, and He whom ye came to hold in the tomb will yet summon you from your graves to render your account. Yea, this is the voice by which all these things shall be accomplished, and then, ye hardened sons of Jacob, shall once more confess to its divine superiority, and thou, Roman soldier, shalt repeat thy eulogy, and ye loving Galileans, amid the tempest that shall roll from pole to pole, shall ye once more hear the comforting words, "It is I, be not afraid," and with cheerful confidence shall respond, "It is the Lord."

Oh, ye believers in the Lord Jesus, be not ashamed to own Him now, neither be ye afraid of all the roar of your adversaries. His voice is omnipotent. He

speaketh, and it is done ; He commandeth, and it standeth fast : yea, His word endureth to a thousand generations ! You know His voice now ; it is to you like that of many waters, rising high above all your fears and accusations, and drowning every tongue which riseth against you ; and it shall speak yet again on your behalf. It has already brought pardon and forgiveness to your sin-stricken heart, and it shall yet bring you a final release from the chains of the flesh and the bondage of corruption. Listen much to it now, as it bids you bear your cross, and as it cheers you with the promise of eternal life ; and then at last, in the resurrection morn, you, with all the redeemed millions, once more will hear Him say, “ Rise up, My love, My fair one, and come away.”

Yes, brethren, the same voice which cheers and animates us now shall call the nations to Jesus’ feet, and make the vast creation tremble before Him. How sweet and powerful is that voice. O that it may now be heard. “ Speak, Lord ! Thy servant heareth.” But, ah ! there are those who despise His voice ; to them there is no music in His sweet accents, and no charm in His words of love. They neither fear His frown, nor covet His approving smile. He speaks by His providence,—in His gospel,—and through the conscience within, but they fear Him not ; and though others hear Him, and leave their sins and follies, and rally to His standard, *they* regard it not, nor lay it to heart. But the Sovereign Judge will not always speak in vain. When His voice shall rend the heavens, and shake the earth, and wake the dead, *then* those who are now hardened shall hear the summons to their everlasting shame and contempt.

“ But ere that trumpet shakes
The mansions of the dead,
Hark, from the gospel’s cheering sound,
What joyful tidings spread.

Ye sinners, seek His grace,
Whose wrath ye cannot bear,
Fly to the shelter of His cross,
And find salvation there.”

And then, with all the righteous, ye shall awake and come forth at the last day, with joy and not with shame, whilst everlasting life will be your recompense, and your likeness to Christ your eternal glory.

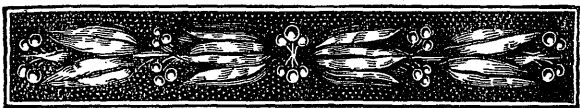
I cannot close these remarks without once more asking you to admire the love and grace of our God, as displayed in Christ Jesus. When sin, like a sweeping flood of death, had broken in upon us, and all the race was being carried along upon its bosom, and nothing but everlasting ruin awaited us, God, who is rich in mercy, so loved our world as to give His only begotten Son to stem the overwhelming curse, and to pluck us from the terrible destruction. And although, in accomplishing this task, He sank for a moment beneath the wrathful waves, He quickly arose and asserted the truth of His own words,—“I am the Resurrection and the Life, and whosoever believeth in Me shall not perish, but have everlasting life.” And as we by grace have believed in Him, we have now the witness within that eternal life is ours ; and though the physical consequences of sin go on, and our bodies return to the dust, yet, after skin worms have devoured them, we know that in our flesh we shall yet see our living Redeemer, whose coming shall change our vile body, and fashion it according to His glorious body, in which we shall serve Him for ever and ever in that heavenly home, where sickness and sorrow, pain and death, are felt and feared no more.

Thus, beloved hearers, we have passed under review the general and common belief of the Church of Christ, from the days of the apostles till now, upon this great doctrine of the resurrection of the dead ; and it seems to us to accord most perfectly with the representations of holy scripture, and to be all that is required to fulfil the predictions of the prophets, and the expectations of the godly. It will, we believe, be found to harmonize with the general testimony of inspiration without doing any violence to a single text. It calls for no unnatural exegesis, nor does it offer the speculations of men in the room of revealed truth. It leaves no scope for wild

imaginations, nor creates difficulties not found in the Book of God ; whilst it answers all the important ends which are designed in the bringing back of the righteous and the wicked to life, without affecting in the least degree the character of God, or impairing the awful realities of that great day,—which cannot be said of the system we are opposing. It also presents a definite and all-absorbing event to the eye of faith, as it unfolds to the world the solemnities of a day, which, by the power of God, at the blast of His trumpet, shall be ushered in, when every son and daughter of Adam shall simultaneously return to live, to receive in the presence of each other the just reward of punishment or praise at the bar of Christ. And since this has ever been, and ever must be, the teaching of the Word of God, we shall firmly hold it to the end, and await the scenes of that day to justify our belief. Nor are we afraid of the results when the Lord shall come.

Blessed, ever blessed Lord, we adore and worship Thee, Whom having not seen we love ; for whom have we in heaven but Thee, and there is none on earth we can compare unto Thee, O Thou chiefest among ten thousand, and the altogether lovely. Even now Thou art all our salvation, and all our desire ; and when we shall see Thee, encircled with Thy rainbow, and crowned with the glory of the Father and angels, O Holy Redeemer, remember not our follies against us, but rather let us still shelter in Thy riven side, and then, O Judge and Saviour, we will be satisfied, whilst with the ransomed Thou shalt give us a greeting, and before all worlds shalt publicly own our worthless name.





LECTURE VI.

“ THE JUDGMENT.”

Delivered Lord's Day, January 21, 1872.

“Seeing it is a righteous thing with God to recompense tribulation to them that trouble you ; and to you who are troubled rest with us, when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels, in flaming fire taking vengeance on them that know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ : who shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power ; when He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe (because our testimony among you was believed) in that day.”—2 Thess. i., 6-10.

“**T**HERE is no department of divine truth,” says Dr. Brown, “more deeply and dangerously affected by the pre-millennial scheme, than that which relates to the Judgment.”

I feel so deeply the truthfulness of this remark, and so much the vastness of the subject we have before us this evening, that I scarcely know how to adjust my thoughts, so as to give a due alarm concerning the errors upon this doctrine, and to guide every enquirer to the infallible conclusion of God's

Word. The violation which is rendered to that Word by the unnatural and contradictory representations of this august scene is such as no Christian mind could tolerate for one moment, unless it were under the most bewildering infatuations. Indeed, it seems to me that pre-millennial writers are led along by the wildest imagination, and are all at sea without a compass, pilot, or chart. And, hence, as we may be sure when the Word of God ceases to be the guide, the greatest confusion and contradiction must be the result. I have tried hard to get something like a definite view of the theories advocated by pre-millenarians that I may not misrepresent the advocates, but may fairly discuss their sentiments; but, alas! after nearly a week's re-reading of their leader's views, I am bound to say that a greater chaos of theological *confusion* and illogical statement could not be found; and if, therefore, I fail to give you any correct idea of what is held on that side you need not be surprised, for, like the false witnesses at our Lord's crucifixion, these pre-millenarian teachers do not agree. One class says that only the righteous will be judged at the day of the Lord; another says, only the wicked. One says the judgment will be at the beginning of the millennium; another, that it will be at the end; whilst a third party contends that it will continue throughout the whole period of one thousand years. One man maintains that the conflagration will be only in the papal states; another, that it will include all Europe; whilst a third believes that it will be universal. And thus upon every point there is *contradiction, error, and injustice*. Bishop Waldegrave, in his Bampton Lectures,¹ says that pre-millenarians are *generally* agreed upon three points,—“First, that the last day, the day of judgment, is a period of time extending over more than one thousand years. Secondly, that the great assize is divided into two portions: the former, the judgment of part of mankind in the morning dawn; the later, the judgment of the remainder in the evening shades of that great day of the

(1) “Bampton Lectures,” 1854, p. 213.

Lord,—the two being disjointed from each other by the intervening mid-day reign of the Messiah. Thirdly, that whilst the righteous enter upon their recompense at the beginning, the wicked do not receive their doom till the end of this protracted period,—of one thousand, one, two, or three hundred years more.” The lecture, from which this quotation is made, was delivered seventeen or eighteen years ago, since which time the diversity has so largely increased, that I should fear to say that these three points would be admitted by a majority now ; indeed, I scarcely know any point upon which there is any real agreement among pre-millenarians, except it be that Christ will come visibly before the millennium, which, as we have proved in these lectures, is an utter delusion.

We, on this side of the question, believe that at the end of time, the Lord will come to judge the world, when the dead and the living will all be summoned to His bar, and every man will receive according to the deeds done in the body ;—that this judgment will be one grand assize, and will be the immediate prelude to the joys of heaven for the righteous, and to the pangs of hell for the wicked ;—that time will then be no more, the earth, and all things therein, being burnt up. This, I may be bold to say, has ever been the prevailing belief of the true Church of God, and its proof is unmistakeably plain in the revelation of truth ; and it does so appeal to our moral and spiritual consciousness, that we ought to be exceedingly careful not to weaken its power, or reduce its solemn importance in the estimation of men. A glance at the passages, which we may have occasion to quote, will fully bear out these remarks, and I hope will make us jealous of God’s honour as connected therewith.

It will be seen, from what has been stated, that we are upon this point, *as on nearly all others connected with the present series of lectures*, at the very antipodes from pre-millenarians, and hence the reason why truth should be investigated, and a standard lifted against the heresies by which we are surrounded. In

attempting to do this, I am exceedingly anxious not to destroy the feeling of deep solemnity which gathers around the subject by the spirit of controversy, which, more or less, must enter into our examination of it. This I find to be a difficult task ; for as the honour of Christ, and some of the most solemn truths of God are at stake in the controversy, one's whole spiritual indignation cannot but be aroused. Nevertheless, I shall strive more to convince by truth than to repel by hard speeches, for "the wrath of man worketh not the righteous of God."

"The Judgment!" How significant these two words! how deep their meaning! and yet how universally understood! What wonderful associations gather around them, and what a deep consciousness they awaken within us! How they make our moral sensibility vibrate; and how they echo through the deepest recesses of our mental being!

"The Judgment!" Ah! that short sentence carries with it the "power of the world to come," and exerts an influence over millions who are moved by nothing else; therefore, let us, with becoming candour, seek its real meaning, and maintain, in all their integrity, the vital truths which it presents.

As on former occasions, I shall try to put the teaching of God's Word upon this subject into a few plain and definite propositions, that the simplest child may be able to carry the truth with him, even though he may not be able to remember the arguments by which it is sustained. And

I.—The Judgment will be ushered in by the coming of the Lord. Now, before I go farther, let us have a clear understanding upon the word "judgment," for though I said a minute ago "how universally understood," I am sorry that pre-millenarians have tried to attach a meaning to it which is altogether foreign to the thing intended. Mr. Brooks says that the idea generally entertained of judgment—that it will be a great assize, at which the Lord Jesus will preside, and all mankind be put upon their trial—is a mistake; for he says, "The characteristics of a judge as given in

scripture are—to rule and govern as a king, to deliver and avenge his people, and to protect and defend them from their enemies.....The chief prophecies which relate to Christ as Judge will further demonstrate that PRINCELY RULE AND GOVERNMENT ARE TO BE THE SPECIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF HIS JUDGMENT, and that it will be a continued office among, or over, the nations.”¹ If these sentiments had been advanced by German neologists, or Bishop Colenso, one would not have wondered so greatly; but when the solemn verities of the final day of decision are thus reduced to the general rule of a *princely government among the nations*, by men, too, who hold in many respects the evangelical truths of the gospel, it is impossible to find language to express our amazement and sorrow, and only in inspired words such as these, “*who hath bewitched you,*” do we feel safe in uttering our horror at the indignity thus done to the whole economy of law and gospel.

“There can be no doubt,” says Dr. Brown, “that the words *judge* and *judgment* are used in scripture both in the sense of exercising kingly rule, and in the sense of inflicting public vengeance. But,” he justly continues, “are these the senses in which Christ will come to judge at the last day? I say emphatically, No! and nothing but the most violent distortion of all the passages which announce that coming to judgment, can bring these senses of the terms into the procedure of that day.”² Let any person of the lowest average of intellect read our text, and see if he will mistake the great truths here taught. Here we have a certain day fixed; “that day,” the day when the Lord Jesus shall be revealed from heaven with His mighty angels in flaming fire, taking vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not the gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. These persons are punished with “everlasting destruction” at the *same time* when the Lord shall be glorified in His saints, and be admired in all them that believe. Let, I say, the

(1) “Elem. of Prophecy Interp.,” pp. 207, 208.

(2) “Brown on the Second Advent,” pp. 24, 25.

simplest mind read this passage, and see if he will err upon it; and then let the most accomplished scholar do the same thing, and if he has no end to serve but truth he will come to the same meaning, and both will unite to reject the unnatural and ill-conceived idea, that the day of judgment is one of *princely government among the nations of the earth*. Or, let any person put all the passages of the New Testament together that speak of the day of judgment, and let him carefully see if there is any sign of a continued office of this supposed *princely rule and government*. We read about tares bound in bundles for the fire, and the wheat gathered into the barn; we read about its being more tolerable for Sodom and Gomorrhoe in the day of judgment than for such as heard the gospel but despised it; we read about the Son of man coming in His Father's glory, and rewarding every man according to his work; we read about the Bridegroom coming when it is too late for a single virgin to get a drop of oil; we read, that when the Lord shall come, "all nations" shall be gathered before Him, and He shall separate them one from another, as a shepherd divideth his sheep from the goats, one party going away into everlasting punishment, the other—the righteous—into life eternal. Is there anything here like a continuous office of government among nations? Nothing! But here *both parties* are fixed in their eternal state, and the judgment is *nothing more, nothing less*, than a "great assize," at which the Lord Jesus presides, and all mankind are put upon their last trial, and everyone receives a just reward. It is therefore certain, that, as plainly as words can do so, the New Testament teaches that "*the day of judgment*" is to be understood in no secondary sense, but that it will be the day in which God shall literally judge the secrets of all men by Jesus Christ; nor can any argument of angels, or men, give any other legitimate meaning to those definite and numerous passages which speak of that terrible day of the Lord.

That day, we have said, will be ushered in by "the coming of the Lord," and this leads me again to

pause. Post-millenarians are often represented as being sceptical upon this "coming of the Lord," as though we did not believe in it, or hope for it, whereas nothing is farther from the truth. We hold the day of the Lord much more perfectly than any pre-millenarians can do; we are looking forward to it with the greatest joy; associated with it is our brightest hope; to it we refer the solution of a thousand mysteries; and from it we are expecting the fullest release from death, and the clearest vindication of our faith and obedience as disciples of Christ. Here the bitterest aspersions are often cast upon us, as children of God, and we have to lie under cruel calumny and reproach, but the thought of "that day" gives us courage to bear our cross, knowing it shall all be well when the Master calls. Here God's truth and Christ's servants are often belied and wrongfully used; but "that day" will shame the persecutor of every kind, and make the wicked tremble in the presence of those they have wronged. And, hence, with ardour, and even vehemence of feeling, do we long for the day when our Lord shall come,—yea, we long to see Him receive the homage of all creation, when every knee shall bow to Him, and every tongue shall confess to His glory; when our own mortality shall be swallowed up of life, and all the redeemed shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption, and be given to enjoy the glorious liberty of the sons of God. Say not that we are indifferent or unbelieving on this grand theme. Oft have we sang, and oftener sighed forth the sentiment,—

“When shall Thy lovely face be seen?
When shall our eyes behold our God?
What lengths of distance lie between,—
And hills of guilt,—a heavy load!
Our months are ages of delay,
And slowly every minute wears;
Fly, wingéd time, and roll away
These tedious rounds of sluggish years.”

Then again we open the sacred records, and reading once more our Lord's words, "Thy will, not Mine, be

done," we learn the spirit of submission, and chide our undue longings, because

"Impatience, not grace, is their source,
While He, Who redeemed us with blood,
Still says to us, 'Carry the cross.'"

And thus we turn back again to our work and our suffering, willing gladly so to do, that Jesus by us may, in the meantime, gather in some of His chosen, and secure to Himself a part of that universal homage which He must receive. In this spirit the godly will continue to help on the purposes of His grace, so that when the great day shall come, millions yet unborn, or in heathen night, may share with us the glory which now so joyfully we anticipate, and which shall be brought unto us at the appearing of the great God and our Saviour. Let none, therefore, belie us on this important point, for all our preaching, praying, and working, have this great end in view; and we are not only anxious to be accepted in that great day ourselves, but we are anxious also to present every man who hears us perfect in Christ Jesus.

At that great appearing, then, the day of judgment will be ushered in, and at a moment when men are little prepared to expect it; for one of the terrible aspects of the imposing scene will be the suddenness with which it will burst upon our world. In putting the several scriptures together which speak of that day, it seems as though the church will be found slumbering, rather than awake; that the tares will still be in the field of Zion; and that Satan's last army will be most active in mocking the truth of God, and in endeavouring to lay waste the spiritual Jerusalem. Then, as a thief in the night, when men's hearts have grown hard in vice and iniquity; when the apostasy shall be ripe for the sickle; when the mockers shall be saying, "Where is the promise of His coming; whilst, it may be, that the drunkard shall be at his cups, and the thief and murderer planning their deeds of darkness; whilst the bold blasphemer shall be taking God's name in vain, and

the scoffer daring the preacher of the cross ;—just then ;—whilst the fool shall be filling his audience with laughter, and the profane jester shall be sporting at sacred things ; whilst the glitter of the ball-room shall appear most fascinating, and the mirth of those who join in the dance be at its climax ;—yes, it may be, it probably will be, just then, without another moment's warning, that the lurid fire will dart from the blackened sky, and all nature become lit with the burning flame ; whilst the earth and all that are therein shall rend and quake, and the mansions of the living and the sepulchres of the dead alike shall tumble to utter ruin, as the archangel's blast will be heard giving the distinctive and universal command, "Awake, ye dead, and come to judgment." What a terrible moment will that be ! Thousands, who a moment before were singing the songs of the drunkard, or hastening to shed innocent blood, or making merry in revelling and sensuality, will, by the first crash of our world, be buried in the universal wreck,—yet not to sleep beneath the awful debris ; for before they shall scarcely have had time to "shuffle off this mortal coil," the summons shall be heard to hasten them to the bar ; and whilst the world is burning, the unnumbered tribes of Adam's race shall be found standing at the judgment-seat, not in bodies subject to the present law of life and death, of want and physical supply, but bodies "changed,"—the righteous into the likeness of Christ's body, and the wicked into such as can be consistent with living where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched. Such, then, we conceive to be the sudden aspect of the day of the Lord. But I notice

II.—That the coming of the Lord—that is, the Judgment Day—will terminate the affairs of time. One would have thought that, after the sweeping language of the New Testament concerning this day, that no one would have called in question the truth embodied in this proposition. But, alas ! alas ! Though the sacred lips of Jehovah have declared that "the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night, in the which the heavens shall pass away with a great noise,

and the elements shall melt with fervent heat, the earth also, and the works that are therein, shall be burnt up," yet we are told by persons, whom I dare not to call *true prophets*, that all this does not mean an end of time, or the destruction of the Jews, or of the heathen nations, but only of such parts of the earth as will be found to be inhabited by professing Christians. If the universality of the conflagration is not taught in the New Testament, and if the "all nations" which Christ shall summons before Him do not mean all mankind,—and if the "every eye" which shall see Him in the clouds do not mean every human eye, then all discussion is at an end, and there is not a statement of God, or man, that henceforth can be relied upon as true. But there can be no doubt upon these great truths to the man who honestly accepts the teaching of the Divine Spirit, for every representation of the scenes shows the same truths,—that the righteous and the wicked will stand together before the judgment-seat of Christ;—that that judgment will be when He comes in the clouds the "second time," "taking vengeance on them that know not God," whilst at the same time He will be "admired in all them that believe,"—which will be at the last day, when the dead and the living will be summoned together, without one missing; and when that righteous judgment of God shall be revealed, "and He will render to *every* man according to his deeds,—to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing, seek for glory and honour and immortality—eternal life; but unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness—indignation and wrath."¹ And then, lest there should after this statement be any question upon the point, Paul further adds, "tribulation and anguish upon *every soul* of man that doeth evil.....but glory, honour, and peace to every man that worketh good." Nor is there any respect of persons with God, for Jew and Gentile are seen together, and rewarded together, or punished together, as the case may be. "For as many

(1) Romans ii. 6, 7, 8.

as have sinned without law, shall also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law, shall be judged by the law ;" all which shall come to pass "in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ."¹ There is nothing more clearly taught in the New Testament than the doctrine we are now contending for,—that at the second coming of Christ all the affairs of time will be brought to an end, and the final judgment be ushered in. A few considerations will show the truth of this statement.

(1) Intercession work will then have ended. When our glorious Redeemer had offered up Himself a sacrifice for sin, as the High Priest of His church, He entered in once into the holy place, having obtained eternal redemption for us, and there "He ever liveth to make intercession." And there, and *nowhere else*, are the functions of His priestly office to be carried on, "for Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us." And as long as He is there, guilty sinners may hopefully come to God by Him, but the moment He leaves the "presence of God," the intercession for sinners will end, and never another will feel the drawings of the Holy Spirit, or find his way to the Divine Father. Indeed, the moment that Christ Jesus lays aside the intercessory work, He assumes the character of the Judge, and vain will be the cries of an affrighted world, and the pleas of formal professors, for no longer will Mercy's door be open to the hardened, nor hypocrites be longer suffered, but he that is unholy will be unholy still, without the least shadow of any hope for a change. Hence the coming of Christ will be the final termination of the dispensation of grace.

(2) All gospel ordinances will end at the Second Advent, for we are put in possession of these "until" Christ comes. "Occupy till I come," is the tenure upon which we hold them, so that the moment He appears they will be given up as of no further service.

(1) Romans ii. 9—16.

No longer shall the church of God show forth the Saviour's death in the sacramental cup ; and no longer will the preacher point to the Cross for a refuge ; no more will the glad tidings of salvation be proclaimed to a perishing world ; and no longer will the promise of grace to the unconverted be in force. When we hear pre-millenarians talk about missionaries carrying the news of the conflagration to the heathen, and of the wonderful success attending their preaching of vengeance and judgment, and of the thousands of Jews and Gentiles converted to Christ thereby, our very soul is filled with the deepest astonishment, and we tremble for the men who can dare thus to turn the awful day of judgment into one of mercy and grace to the ungodly world. Or when we hear another class of these deluded brethren talking about a "fire-proof" ark, in which the heathen and the Jews are to be saved amid the deluge of flame, as was Noah amid the deluge of water, we stand aghast, and scarcely know which to call in question the most,—their sanctity or sanity, their reason or religion. There is the most unmistakeable evidence in inspiration, that the burning of the world and all things therein,—the gathering of all the nations before the Judge of quick and dead,—the melting of the elements,—and the eternal award to the righteous and the wicked at the same time, will put an end to all earthly affairs, finally stay the progress of our race, and at once terminate the probation of every child of Adam. And to assert anything to the contrary, is to put the *human* in the stead of the *divine*, and to leave a loop-hole for a false hope, the consequences of which are fearful to contemplate.

Now all this insult to God and to truth which we have mentioned, is designed to save and bolster up a pet, but unholy theory, the gist of which is the coming of Christ before the millennium, and the temporal grandeur of the Jews. And having set up this theory, *for which there is no shadow of evidence in the New Testament*, rather than retract, it seems as though many pre-millenarians would pull the whole temple of grace to the ground, and de-

stroy both the earthly and heavenly hope of the church of Christ. This may appear strong language to persons who are not acquainted with the writings in question, but it would be easy to show how every syllable in these lectures, spoken against the theories we are examining, fall far below the censure they richly deserve from the faithful servants of God. What claim, I ask, has the Jew upon the clemency of Christ at His coming, more than the masses of unconverted men and women around about us? Has the worst infidel in our land more bitterly blasphemed the Holy Name we love than he? Has any other nation under heaven so wilfully sinned against light and goodness as the nation of the Jews? Why then, I ask again, are Jews to be put into a "patent safety," and tided over the sea of fire, when the nations of Christendom are to be burnt up? Are there not tens of thousands in our midst, who, though they are not really saved, *would not, could not*, curse the Saviour, or speak lightly of His gospel? yet these are to be buried in the flames, whilst the hardened Jew, whose bitter invective is hurled against the Son of God, and in whose skirts the blood of the Crucified Nazarene is found, is to be the Noah of righteousness in the coming fury-deluge. Yea, more! not only are our moral, and in many respects upright neighbours, to be destroyed, whilst the Jew is to be petted and saved, but even the righteous who love Christ, and live for Christ, and are ready to die for Christ, even those, as we saw in our last lecture, are not to be exempt from the terrible calamity, unless they believe these unscriptural dogmas of pre-millenarians; whilst the Jew, who has hated Christ, whose whole life has been against Christ, and who, if he had the opportunity, would again crucify Christ, is assured against all harm, for no other reason than because he is a Jew.

Now we are not contending against the right or sovereignty of God, for we know He cannot do wrong, and if He had revealed this doctrine of respect of persons it would be ours to wait for clearer light to make it plain; but since He has not revealed a word concerning it, but has given us truths in direct opposition

to it, we are bound in honour to Him to say, the doctrine is not from heaven, nor can any one receive it without doing despite to the Spirit of Grace, and putting the truth of Christ to an open shame.

I used a strong word last week when speaking of the representations of these men. I then called their sad perversions a burlesque. I am almost sorry I did so, for I want that word now, as it is the most fitting one that I know to apply to the statements that are made upon this part of our enquiry. Let any godly man or woman take the bible and read every passage which relates to the judgment day, and thereby get clearly before the mind,—the glorious appearing of the “Son of man” in the clouds of heaven; the thrilling shout by which all nature trembles before Him; the consuming fire which extends to everything upon this globe; and the final “depart ye cursed,” and “come ye blessed.” I say, let any serious mind get the whole scriptural scene before it, and then let the same reader turn to the ludicrous caricatures which pre-millennialism draws, and assuredly such a mind will be both pained and disgusted at the sight. What do we here find? These things! The coming is a secret thing, to take up a few of the choice souls into the clouds, where for a while they are to be suspended like Mahomed’s coffins, while the marriage supper of the Lamb is literally celebrated. The fire is only a local judgment in Europe; or, if wider, Jews and heathens, (and according to Mr. Molyneux, the cattle too,¹) are to be huddled together during the conflagration into a huge ark. The judgment is, Christ ruling among the nations, or rewarding heathens *for having, without knowing it*, given a cup of cold water to some strayed disciple, and for which they are to have such dominion over all things as Adam had before fallen.² These, together with a thousand other vagaries, are the things which pious men entertain their audience with in the present day, and about which they write no end of books, and deliver no end of lectures and

(1) “World to Come,” pp. 71-76.

(2) Mr. Dallas’ “Bloomsbury Lectures,” 1843, p. 306.

sermons. But, perhaps, you will say, Who believes them? I wish I could assure you that the number of such was small, but I fear it is far otherwise. There are whole congregations in this and other towns, who, if they do not believe *all* the nonsense I have intimated, believe the theory out of which all this comes; and many of them have unwittingly been committed to a system, the danger and consequences of which, at present, they are little aware of. Scores of clergymen in the Church of England, and some in the Churches of Scotland, must be ranked among the advocates of these delusions; and I am pained to have to add, that in almost all denominations of Christians, hands are upheld in favour of them, whilst every Plymouth Brother, and nearly all "Revivalists,"—or, as they prefer to be called, "Evangelists,"—are scattering broadcast the pernicious seeds of these heresies on every side.

In speaking as I have done of the Jews, let no one think me unkind towards the seed of Abraham! I long as much as any man for the day when the vail shall be taken away from them; but what I contend for is this,—that it is unscrupulously wicked to cry down Christianity as is done by the advocates of the system in question; and also, that for Jew and Gentile there is but one door of mercy, and that is Jesus Christ, for no man cometh to the Father but by Him. A Jew, therefore, has no special privilege of grace or glory. He must come to God by the one consecrated way, or *not at all*; and when he has come he has no privilege of grace or glory above us. *If we are Christians*, he and we alike are "fellow-citizens with the saints, and of the same household of God;" and neither in time, nor in eternity, will there be any distinction again between us; nor is he nearer to the heart of Jesus than the poorest negro that comes to Him with a loving and believing soul, for "henceforth know we no man after the flesh; yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we Him no more." Nor shall the coming day of judgment show any respect to nationality or blood; for the "tribulation and anguish" which are to come upon every soul of

man that doeth evil, are to fall alike upon the Jew and Gentile, as described by Paul in Romans ii., 9. From all that we have seen in the Word of infallible truth, we are compelled then to believe that the judgment will bring all the events of time to a final end; for if the earth is destroyed, the elements melted, all the race of mankind judged—and that, too, at the coming of the Lord to judgment,—there can be nothing beyond that period but the endless eternity, in which is to be found the final state of the righteous and of the wicked. Believing these facts to be beyond the possibility of a doubt, we hasten to the next thought.

III.—*The Judgment will be of a PERSONAL, and not a NATIONAL character.* According to most premillenarians, the judgment at Christ's coming will be of a national, and not an individual kind. Indeed, according to the least objectional theory,—that of Joseph Medes,—many of the race of Adam will never come into judgment at all. It is distressing in the last degree to behold the sad descriptions which carnal vanity has substituted for the truth of God upon this momentous subject. When we read that the Prince of Israel,—that is, the Lord Jesus Christ,—and of the angels engaging in military warfare, and the saints¹ possessing “caustic and destructive” properties,—of newly-won Jews shewing their first allegiance to Christ by fighting in the “dreadful carnage,” “so dreadful,” we are told, “that even the Holy Ghost Himself seems to have laboured for expression and imagery to describe it,”—when the Lamb of God is to “begin” the fight,² and when “there will be lakes and rivers of blood as deep as from the ground to the bridle of a mounted horseman,” and that for two hundred miles long,³ in which the saints just fresh from the banquet of wine in the clouds⁴ are to “wash their feet.” I say, when we read such profane things as these, and find them represented as a part and

(1) See Brook's “Abdiel's Essays,” p. 97. Fourth Edition,

(2) Danbuz, Lancaster's Abridgment, p. 548.

(3) Govett, “Treatise on Apocalypse,” p. 320.

(4) “When this wondrous feast has ended, another scene of a far different kind shall follow. . . . The feast being ended, the saints go forth to BATTLE.”—By the author “*The Last Vials.*”

parcel of the judgment day, we are compelled boldly to say that they are not gathered from the Spirit of Christ, the record of God, or the teaching of the Holy Ghost ; they accord with neither, and, therefore, we reject them as the offspring of a vitiated imagination, and an unseated judgment. Hence we turn away from them once more to hear the "THUS SAITH THE LORD."

It is a generally received opinion that nations are punished in the present state, as there can be no corporate bodies in the world to come ; and the history of God's providence fully bears out the belief. We have only to look at Babylon, Judæa, Rome, and France, to find ample illustration of its truthfulness, without turning further to the universal testimony of sacred and profane history. Here, then, the fate of nations is decided, whilst the fate of individuals will be deliberated upon at the judgment-seat of Christ.

It is impossible to give a full description of that scene, or to put in order the events as they shall occur,—this we must leave till "that day;" but we are certain of a few things, and these we may mention for our profit.

(1) *Every INDIVIDUAL child of Adam will be there.* I hope no one here doubts this solemn truth, for be assured that "He hath appointed a day in which He will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom He hath ordained ; wherefore He hath given assurance unto all men, in that He hath raised Him from the dead." "The world," then, will be there, which does not exclude the Church ; for in writing to saints, Paul declares, "We must all appear before the judgment-seat of Christ, that every one may receive the deeds done in the body, according to that he hath done, whether good or bad. Knowing, therefore, the terrors of the Lord, we persuade men." And that they will be all there together is evident in that the Judge shall "SEPARATE" the righteous from the wicked, even as a shepherd doth the sheep from the goats. Here, then, we have the infallible truth stated, that every man, woman, and child will be there, without the

possibility of an exception. What a mighty throng, to which the one thousand, two hundred and eighty-eight millions of the present day will be but as a handful, and yet in all that unprecedented crowd no individuality will be concealed. All the righteous will be there—all the wicked—all the ages of the world, and all the grades of men. The men who mocked Noah, and those who vexed the righteous soul of Lot; Esau, who sold his birth-right for a mess of pottage, and Pharoah who hardened his heart against God; Judas who betrayed the Lord with a kiss, and Pilate who gave Him to be crucified;—these all will be there. The long list, too, of the persecutors of the saints, both in heathen and papal days, will respond to the call; nor will protestant persecutors escape from the throng, or the notice of the Judge. Those, also, who here denied the revelation of God, such as Paine and Voltaire, Hume and Owen, with all their followers, who think it manly to defy their Maker, and reject the message of His Son,—these all will come to His bar. Let us solemnly think of them, with all the millions who know not God, and obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ, and let us try to depict the scene as they shall stand before the Judgment-seat. Is it hard to know the just from the unjust? the pure from the ungodly? Is it a matter of doubt in any mind whether he be a child of God or not? Nay, there is no room for any question upon these points now. The righteous hail the Saviour as their living Lord, whilst the wicked are ashamed and confounded before Him. And now, ye scoffers, why hang down your heads? and ye despiser of truth, why are ye afraid? If the doctrines ye propounded in your life-time be true, why not face them out? If there is no God, why do ye tremble before HIM upon the glory-cloud? and if there be no hereafter, why do ye fear the awful sentence? Judas! why not again enrich thy coffer with the price of God's own Son? Here are the scribes and chief priests all close at hand; offer now thy service for a given price! Dost thou not know Him now? Look up, O guilty man; see if He be not

the same Jesus, yea, the very same, Whom thou wast not afraid to kiss when covered with His crimson sweat! Art thou afraid before Him now? Where is now thy Roman band? Canst thou not bid thy soldiers yet again to hold Him fast? Ah, Judas! Judas! thou traitorous wretch! dost thou not know that "this is He?" the very Christ? Yea, verily; and gladly wouldst thou shun His glance; but now, alas! there can be no escape; no suicidal hands can give the least relief; but thou before all worlds must stand exposed, till every thought of thy base heart has been revealed, and thy just sentence passed by those most righteous lips once pressed by thine. Ah, brethren, how changed the scene! Poor puny, guilty men are bold enough in this vain life, and dare defy both God and man; but not so then,—

"When shrivelling like a parched scroll,
The flaming heavens together roll;
When louder yet, and yet more dread,
Swells the high trump that wakes the dead."

Then the stoutest heart shall tremble with fear, and the boldest sceptic shall confess to the justice of God, and the glory of His Christ; whilst the feeblest saint shall rejoice in his Saviour, and stand clothed in spotless purity before the Father's face. And though the wood, hay, and stubble of many builders in Zion will be consumed, and the vail be rent from much that is concealed and hidden, still, for all to whom Jesus was the foundation in life, there will be joyful hope; and these builders shall be saved, even though as by fire, and shall give special thanks to the great Master Who, amid so much impurity and unholiness, rendered their salvation secure, and gave them an inheritance among the saints in light.

(2) It will be a time of final meeting and parting with many of the sons of men. Old associates, who from the day of death shall have been separated by the gulph which lies between the endless joy and endless woe, will for the last time come together—*parents and children—teachers and scholars—pastors and people*; but not as they have met before. Then the parent

will offer no more prayers for godless sons or daughters, nor will the teacher any more speak words of salvation to the heedless class; the preacher will no more stand as an ambassador to his unsaved hearers, nor point again to the Lamb of God; but our relations will all be changed, and our work will all be new. We shall then be witnesses against some whom we sought to save, and even swift witnesses against many that we tried to lead to the saving Cross. How the sight of the men who faithfully set forth the way of life will terrify the ungodly, and the warnings and tears of the messengers of Christ come fresh to the sinner's mind. What a meeting will that be, when, not even in a whisper, shall one say to another, "Believe, and be saved," nor the most compassionate offer a suppliant word for the guilty throng. No! the die will be cast, and the destiny fixed, and the meeting will be one of justice and judgment, and not of mercy and grace. Therefore, whilst upon the door of Mercy it is still written,—“Ask, and it shall be given; seek, and ye shall find,” may many of you hasten to enter, for our living High Priest is still interceding, and the day of mercy is not ended. But when once He riseth from His intercessory throne, the hours of salvation will have closed, and the moments of grace have passed away; or, which to us is the same thing, when the hand of death shall lay us low in the dust, and we are numbered with the dead, our condition will be unalterable, as our final state will be eternally fixed; for,

“There is no repentance in the grave,
Nor pardons offered to the dead.”

Therefore, if before then we have not sheltered in the cleft of the Rock of Ages, our naked souls must be exposed to the fierce and eternal storm of wrath, which especially will be ushered in at the judgment day, when the judgment shall be set, and the books be opened.

Oh, those books! those terrible books of God's remembrance! and, doubtless of human consciences too; between whose hidden folds the deeds of men,

written as with iron pen and unfading ink, now lie concealed. Oh, who shall bear to have them opened, when every act shall be revealed before angels and men,—before friends and foes?

Then that other book too,—the Book of Life, the register of the living, the roll of all who have found life in the risen Lord,—so many, *no more*; so that those not found therein shall be cast into outer darkness, which is the “second death;” whilst everyone who has fled to Jesus shall be counted among the Redeemer’s loved ones, and with them shall be presented before the Father, without wrinkle or spot, and shall enter at once into the joy of the Lord. Then, dear Redeemer,

“In Thy fair book of life and grace,
O may I find my name
Recorded in some humble place,
Beneath my Lord, the Lamb.”





LECTURE VII.

“THE FINAL STATE.”

Delivered Lord's Day, January 28th, 1872.

“And these shall go away into everlasting punishment: but the righteous into life eternal.”

Matt. xxv., 46.



HERE is no other system of theology that proposes such an entire revolution in the interpretation of scripture as does premillennialism. Almost every doctrine of the gospel is more or less seriously affected by it, whilst some of the old landmarks are entirely removed. It would not be too much to say that these novel expositions of the Word of God are as revolutionary, when compared with those of the apostles, as was the apostles' teaching in contrast with the literal ideas of the Jews; without, however, being able to lay any claim to inspiration, or to show any advantage by the change. When Peter and Paul laid their hands on old scriptures, the object generally was to turn upon them the light of the new dispensation, and thereby to give them a breadth and fulness of spiritual meaning which Jews never before dreamt of. But the effect of the system in question is to rob those passages of this inspired depth, and to shut them up to

the old carnal limits of scribes and Pharisees. Therefore, instead of leading the children of God on from one degree of glory to another, this takes them back to the fleshly ordinance of Judaism, and localizes them within the boundaries of the Promised Land. We have already got some glimpses of those proposed changes of interpretation, and this evening we shall see that even the final state of man is not allowed to remain intact. We do not mean to say that premillenarians have no heaven or hell in their system, but these are generally so thrown into the shade by the prominence given to *pavilion clouds*,—the *literal Canaan*,—and *military carnage*,—that we can scarcely get even a faint sight of anything beyond; and when we do, it is so unlike what we have been in the habit of looking upon, that it is almost impossible in many writers to recognize it as the same; which will be seen as we proceed with our investigation, and which I hope will lead everyone present to see the violence thereby done to truth, and at the same time will give us an opportunity of turning once more, with fitting solemnity, to the scriptural representations of our final destiny, with the sacred resolve to hold fast the truth in the face of any gloss which angels or men may attempt to put upon it. We took occasion, a little while ago, to criticise and to condemn the sentimental nonsense of the “Gates Ajar;” but in comparison to much which is said in connection with the present controversy, even that would be far preferable, provided it made no farther advances into the region of foggy carnality. But there is a great law of divine retribution connected with the handling of the Word of God deceitfully, so that we cannot violate that Word without enslaving ourselves in a terrible bondage; and if we are not honest enough to beat a speedy retreat, we shall surely find it necessary to add error to error, in order to make our system consistent; and hence it is that error never remains stationary. Perhaps a fuller illustration of this could not be found than in the system we are now examining. The cardinal ideas having been advanced, the filling up became necessary,

and so the work has gone on, until we have the huge mass of contradiction before us.

We need not spend our time to prove that the thoughts of the final state have ever entered largely into the influences by which men have been governed or sustained amid the scenes of this present life. A few minds there may be, who have grown sufficiently hardened not to dread, or desire, aught beyond what they see ; but these are the exception, and not the rule. Even heathens live and act one toward another very much in harmony with the ideas they entertain of the world to come, and of the gods whom they adore or dread. This universal consciousness of the future state, and its powerful effect upon the human mind, ought to make us very jealous to know the precise truth which God has graciously revealed to us concerning that future, so that every aspiration and feeling may be guided aright, that at the end we may sustain neither damage nor loss. It shall be my prayerful aim so to guide your minds in the present lecture.

Before we go further, it will not be unseasonable to notice the necessity for future rewards and punishments, which seems to arise out of the present nature of things. Here the righteous and wicked live together, and in many respects one common lot happens to them both ; in some other cases the righteous seem to have the heaviest burdens, and in general there is an unequal distribution of the comforts and blessings of this present life, all of which make another state not only desirable, but really necessary. Some of the most godly men the world ever saw have had to wade through seas of trouble, without scarcely a ray of external sunshine ; whilst some of the most reckless and profane persons have had little else than worldly prosperity from the beginning to the end of their lives. Nor is this inequality observable in extreme classes only, but we may see it even among the righteous themselves, and, indeed, among the ungodly too. How often do we see some of the most devoted servants of Christ labouring with transparent purity

to advance His kingdom, and yet their path is strewn with briars and thorns; whilst time-servers get the ease, and roses of apparent prosperity. These things in righteousness must be adjusted, and in the end will be adjusted. "Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, Who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the heart;"¹ "And then," as Doddridge paraphrases it, "shall everyone have in the most public manner that praise from God, before the assembled world, which is proportionable to his real character and conduct." Any other view than this is most injurious to the godly mind, as was seen in the case of Asaph. Until he went into the sanctuary and considered the end, he rebelled at the unequal distribution exhibited in his days, and even said, "Verily I have cleansed my heart in vain, and washed my hands in innocency. For all the day long have I been plagued, and chastened every morning."² But no sooner does he refer to the grand future, than his whole heart is changed, and he exclaims, "Thou shalt guide me by Thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire beside Thee." Thus the thought of the future state hushes the murmurings of the godly, and offers a solution of the dark, and otherwise inextricable ways of divine providence.

But coming more specially to the subject of this lecture, I observe—

I.—THAT THE FUTURE STATE HAS EVER BEEN THE HOPE OF THE RIGHTEOUS. Pre-millenarians have set up a contradiction to this fact, and have gone so far as to state that Jews had no promise of any inheritance beyond the literal Canaan. We do not wish to be too sweeping in this remark. There are a few exceptions. The author of "Plain Papers" labours to free *himself* from this charge, and deplors the sad representations of the future state by some of his brethren. "Nothing," he says, "makes Christians so instantly recoil

(1) 1 Corinthians iv., 5.

(2) Psalm lxxiii., 13, 14.

from prophetic studies, as the idea to which too many writers on prophecy have given sanction, viz., that the future portion of the Church is one of blessedness on earth,—*renovated and purified*, but still earth.” “The hope of the Church,” he continues, “is a heavenly, not an earthly hope.”¹ From these remarks you would suppose that this writer was quite orthodox upon the heavenly state; but in reading further on you find that all the *emphasis* of this passage is on the word “Church,” and that after all the seed of Abraham has no heaven. He says, “Israel’s calling and that of the Church being so *different*, it follows of necessity that their *hopes also differ*.”² Israel,” he says in another place, “and the nations will be happy, Israel pre-eminently so, under the reign of Christ and His glorified saints; but *no distinction* can be more marked, *no contrast* more striking, than that which exists between the Bride of the Lamb and the nations over which she, with her Lord and Bridegroom, is to reign. Israel’s distinctive calling is to earthly blessings;”³ so then, after all, Israel and all nations saved after the millennium begins, are deprived of the hope of heaven, *earthly blessing alone being their inheritance*. Thus this author

“Keeps the word of promise to the ear,
But breaks it to the hope.”

Last week I had to contend against the ungodlike preference which this system shows for Jews in the fiery deluge; now I have to quarrel with the same system for shutting a believing Jew out of heaven. What, I ask, is there in the condition of a penitent Jew, or what in the whole bible, to prevent him from indulging in the same hope as any other man? This dreadful spirit of caste, which pre-millennialism has introduced into the Church, is a monstrous libel upon the gospel of Christ, and is fitting only for the benighted tribes of India, and the haughty lips of the ostentatious Brahmin! I am aware that I should be answered with the plea, that Jews who believe *now* will

(1) “Plain Papers,” p. 7. (2) Ditto, p. 323. (3) Ditto, p. 322.

constitute a part of the Church, and only the Jews that believe *after the millennium commences* will enter upon the distinctive line of earthly blessedness. To me, however, this is a most unsatisfactory reply, for the New Testament, I again assert, knows no distinction between Jew and Gentile, nor will any distinction ever again be set up, for "of a truth.....God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness, is accepted with Him."¹ And thus the wall of partition is gone, no more to be built; and faith in Jesus before His incarnation, or faith in Jesus now, or faith in Jesus in the millennium, alike gives union to Him, and privilege in all that ever He will bestow upon His Church, for all who ever believe on Him will share the answer of His prayer, and be with Him, beholding His glory,—not one class seeing Him *afar off* in His glory, and the other *with* Him, but altogether in one body they will be partakers of His heavenly inheritance; and any system that denies this is not from Him, and deserves to be banished from the society of all men who have any regard for the honour of truth or the glory of God. Had Abraham no promise of a better Canaan than the literal? If not, he and Isaac and Jacob were miserably deceived when they desired the "better country, that is an heavenly." And Paul was guilty of falsehood when he said, "Wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God: for He hath prepared for them a city."² And why, we may ask, is not God ashamed? Why! because, though they never possessed the great promises made to them of Canaan, yet they had the better country they desired, and therefore God was not ashamed to be called their God, for He had fully satisfied them, though four hundred years may roll away before their seed enter upon the earthly inheritance.

And yet after all this inspired explanation, we are gravely told that good old Abraham must be raised, be deprived once more of the "better country," and must literally be the landowner of Canaan, or God's

(1) Acts x., 34, 35.

(2) Heb. xi., 16.

promise cannot be verified. The Holy Ghost, however, in the passage quoted, says, that both Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob on the one side, and their God on the other, consider the matter fully settled, wherefore God is not ashamed of the promise made, or the way in which it has been fulfilled; for these patriarchs never expected personally to receive the earthly inheritance, but saw by faith their children enjoying it, whilst for themselves they looked for that inheritance which, unlike the earthly, fadeth not away; and for that "city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God." Seeing that this divine contract is fully carried out, and the holy fathers resting in that better country, what will sincere and intelligent Christians think of the pious verbiage that represents these glorified saints coming back to *claim, hold, and cultivate* the soil of Palestine? I have read such descriptions of the new heaven and new earth, in which resurrection saints are to find their future glory, as to justify me in saying, that if they are true, then Elisha and many of his heavenly companions will yet follow at the plough-tail,—Boaz and Jesse will yet drive a thriving business in the growing of corn and the grazing of flocks,—the artizans of ancient times will again ply their celestial fingers in making jewels, bells for horses, &c.,—and David, pleased with the sight of the luscious juice from the grape, shall literally, as we are told, take the cup of salvation and call upon the name of the Lord, whilst some more humble brother may be crying his wares through the streets of Jerusalem. Dr. Cumming, speaking of this paradise restored, says, "In that day there may be *all* that we have now: the sower may still sow, but in sure hope; the reaper may still reap, but in ecstasy of joy. We must not," he says, "etherealize the future: we are to have bodies, though resurrection bodies; we are to live upon this orb, though a re-baptized and regenerated orb; we shall be men *as* we are now. In that day, every house and dwelling shall no more be common and profane; the head of the house shall be the high priest, to offer up the prayers and the praises of the group that is

around him. Wherever *smoke* ascends, or hearts beat, or a family congregates, shall be holiness to the Lord. Daily bread shall be eaten like sacramental bread, the table of God's providence shall be holy as the table of the Lord. The church shall be in the house, and the house shall be in the church, and the humblest furniture within shall be holy as the ark, beautiful as the cherubim, and the glory that was between." If anyone should think this bewitching quotation inapplicable, I would remind him, that the enchanting scene here described is after the earth has passed its baptism of fire, and when the inhabitants are the resurrection saints; and to justify the idea of glory on this "regenerated orb" we are told, on another page, that the Doctor has seen glens in the highlands of Scotland so beautiful, that were there no sin or sorrow, "he could consent to live in them for ever;"¹ so that I hope I have done this popular author no wrong in giving his incongruous picture in this connection,—a picture, in which bodies, fashioned like unto the glorious body of our divine Lord (for such will resurrection bodies be), are seen living in houses with smoking chimneys,—congregating in families with parental head,—enjoying the comforts of fire, food, and shelter,—where the hand of Providence is seen supplying the daily wants of the inmates, who, being as *we are* now, will cook, bake, and serve in those cottages, where the "humble furniture will be holy as the ark." Were it not that we feared being misunderstood, we should certainly dismiss this carnal and baseless caricature with words of strong indignation;²

(1) "Signs of the Times," pp. 130, 131.

(2) A shrewd writer says, "Can Dr. Cumming really believe this? Then he may imagine Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob whistling at the plough-tail, churning butter, or stewing in a bakery; then he may imagine Paul with a dustman's cart, or Peter crying 'Sweep.' For if there will be *smoking chimneys*, as the Doctor suggests, of course there will be sooty ones, and the soot will want removing,—the chimneys will want sweeping, and who must sweep them? There are none but glorified saints on earth, and who then but glorified saints to be chimney sweepers?... Will servants be allowed? If so, were are they to come from, and who will they be? If some of the redeemed are to be servants to others, that might suit those served, but how would it suit the servants, especially if they had been servants before? It is true they would be *used* to it, which might make them valuable *as* servants, but how would it accord with the *hope* that had been set before them in the gospel."—*Plain Paper on the Millennium*, pp. 143, 144. Houlston and Wright.

but instead of this, we will rather, with a solemn grief, ask you,—you who read and love your bibles, if you have ever found a single line in them to suggest any such a mad reverie as is here indulged in? or did you ever suppose, with another writer, (the author of "*The Even-Tide*,"¹) that the literal Jerusalem was the "fulness of joy" to which David alluded, and that by "the pleasures for ever more" at the "right hand" of God, *Europe* is to be understood, whilst the Mediterranean Sea is the "River of Life," and Adam and Noah the trees of life upon its shores?¹ I say, did such a theory ever cross your imagination? and can you suppose that these were the things of which holy men of old spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost? I do not profess to divine, but I feel assured that most of you will wonder with me how any sane men can descend to such folly, or how pious people can tolerate such violation of God's sacred Word. Yet, sad to relate, these are the things which simple-minded Christians read, admire, and circulate. The books, with these worse than worthless representations within their covers, are bought and presented as birth-day gifts and tokens of Christian affection, in this land of bibles, and in this year of grace; and woe to the man who dares to call in question the wisdom of the donor, or the truthfulness of the volume given, as our own experience can testify.

But to return to our proposition. Is there a single person in this congregation that could ever believe that these repelling vagaries entered in the slightest degree into the hope of Abraham or David, Isaiah or Paul? Did these things compose the rest which remained for the people of God? Was it for *these* that the three great patriarchs so much desired? Were these the things David expected to be satisfied with when he awoke up in his Lord's likeness, or was it to participate in such a paradise that Paul so earnestly strove? I hope these important questions will carry with them the most emphatic "No!" and that no one here will ever allow himself to be persuaded by any

(1) "*The Even-Tide*," p. 354. Vol 2.

silvery speeches, or fascinating representation, to take the first step into these pre-millennial delusions, even though enticed by the speeches and representations of the most holy men ; for though the bait may be gilded, and the argument plausible, be assured you are never safe when once you have crossed the line ; and you cannot divine what incongruities and inconsistencies you will not believe, if once you depart from the old paths of sacred truth. Let nothing, therefore, to your view lower the glory of the future, nor make divisions and castes in the world to come ; neither allow anything to give to your Lord's character a spirit of partiality, nor to deprive one of His loved ones, Jew or Gentile, of his proper place in the ONE BODY. Let but the heavenly hope be affected by error, and in proportion thereto the dread of the wicked will also be abated, and thereby the whole power of the world to come will be weakened and changed, if not entirely destroyed.

The Old Testament saints, and the New, alike, held that the wicked was driven away in his wickedness, whilst the righteous had hope in his death ; and as David, under loss and bereavement, found consolation in the thought of going to those who had gone to glory ; and as Paul reckoned that the sufferings of this present life were not worthy to be compared to the glory that is to be revealed in us, let us with them look forward with joy to the house not made with hands, eternal, and in the heavens. And as the whole Jewish economy is not only *shaken*, but *removed*, that the kingdom we now have—which cannot be moved—may take its place, let us hold fast the profession of our faith, without wavering, and never again be led back to the things that were both carnal and temporal, for “we are come to Mount Sion, and unto the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and the church of the first-born which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant. See, therefore, that ye refuse

not Him that speaketh ; for if they escaped not who refused Him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from Him that speaketh from heaven." But we will not refuse Him, His voice attracts us upwards, He calls us, "it is the voice of our beloved !" He called to saints of old ; and amid suffering and reproach they "endured, as seeing Him Who is invisible," having respect unto the recompense of the reward. He called to apostles ; and they fought the good fight in the Christian warfare, knowing there was laid up for them IN HEAVEN the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, so freely bestows. He called to the confessors and martyrs ; and under the inspiring voice, they "took joyfully the spoiling of their goods," and "loved not their lives unto the death," feeling that their light afflictions, which were but for a moment, worked for them a far more exceeding and ETERNAL WEIGHT OF GLORY. He is still calling ; and often our eyes are upward to OUR INHERITANCE, and as one dear friend after the other climbs the walls of the celestial city, and amid its bright effulgence is lost to our sight,—and as the piercing winds of this hollow and selfish world cut us to the quick, we almost instinctively exclaim,—

"Break off, then, these bonds that detain
My soul from her portion in Thee ;
O strike off this adamant chain,
And make me eternally free."

Still willing yet to wait till the Master bids us "come up higher," we manfully fill our post of service, neither beating a coward's retreat from duty, nor lending a hand with fleshly motives, but with singleness of eye serving the Lord.

"Thus Faith doth take a pleasing view ;
Hope waits ; Love sits and sings ;
Desire flutters to be gone ;
But Patience clips her wings."

Having thus tried to show you how the future has ever been the hope of the righteous, I come to a second thought, viz.,—

II.—That the state to which the judgment introduces us is the final one,—EVERLASTING PUNISHMENT, —LIFE ETERNAL ; by which I mean, that as near as it is possible for two acts which are successive to be together, the righteous and the wicked will be awarded with their eternal destiny,—not one a thousand years before the other, but, as it would seem in the presence of each other, the decision on both is given, and immediately carried into effect. But for the outrageous notions which we shall have occasion to mention under this head, I should not have troubled you with this division, for I suppose there are but few here that have any misgivings on this subject ; still, as there is an opposite theory, we must allude to it, and endeavour to show our reasons for its rejection : and

(1) The final disposing of all the race seems to put the matter beyond a doubt. If the two classes—the just and unjust—are disposed of at the same time, it certainly would argue that all time must then end, and the world become empty, especially as it is completely enveloped in flames before this, without any intimation of even Dr. Burnett's race from the slime. Not so, however, Mr. Bickersteth, Mr. Birks, and others. Mr. Birks says, "Does the Word of God distinctly reveal to us a time when the number of mankind shall be *complete*, and a close put for ever to the course of human generations? or, does it unfold the prospect of *successive generations of the redeemed throughout the course of the ages to come?*"¹ That these questions imply the author's sentiments is clear enough, but we are not left to mere conjecture, for he presently tells us that no one could infer from the scriptures "that there was *any* final bound assigned to the course of human generations." Mr. Bickersteth is still more explicit, if possible. After speaking of the millennium and the judgment, he says, "But no change is then mentioned as passing on the Jewish nation, or on the living righteous who continue faithful to God.....The living righteous, then, after the millennium, may yet continue a seed to serve God in *successive generations.*"² It

(1) "The Four Prophetic Empires," p. 310.
 (2) "Lent Lectures," 1843, p. 331. Second Edition.

would be possible to produce a number of other authors to the same effect, but I think these quotations are quite enough to show that the writers have no finality in their system. What are we to make of these endless generations, the successive generations of the redeemed, who are to go on propagating throughout the course of the ages to come? What kind of beings will these celestial babies be? Will they be very handsome? Will they be fretful, or good? Will they be subject to the ailments of the present infants? Perhaps I was wrong in calling them "celestial babies!" Still they must be very different to our little things that are born in sin and shapen in iniquity, or this successive race of living righteous will be little better off than we, and preaching and conversion will have to go on throughout the course of endless ages. How does this unmanageable theory agree with God's revelation? Does it strike you that this looks at all harmonious with our text? In our simplicity we frankly acknowledge that we have never seen a word of all this in the bible, and until we get a new revelation we are compelled to disown it, and to tell our brethren that it is not from heaven, but is utterly opposed to the spirit and genius of the gospel. How are these endless generations of successive ages to be dealt with? Will they ever be judged? Will they die? These questions we must leave to the authors of the system to solve; for as God has nothing to do with them, He has given us no light upon them, nor need we trouble ourselves to know; for when all mankind shall be changed from natural to spiritual bodies, the good received up into glory, the bad cast into outer darkness, there will be no more "*successive generations*," for there will be no beings in the flesh, and the delusion we have noticed will vanish, like a baseless vision, at the break of day, for the children of the *resurrection and the changed* will both be like the angels of God, who neither marry nor are given in marriage.

(2) *The nature of the sentence leads to the same conclusion, viz., that the state into which the judgment introduces all mankind is the final one.* I hope I do

impugn the intelligence, or Christian belief of my hearers, when I conclude, that they have ever understood that this awfully solemn sentence of the Holy and Universal Judge means just what it says. But pre-millennialism tells us it means nothing of the kind. Mr. Dallas says that, "Come, ye blessed, inherit the kingdom prepared for you," simply means, "Inherit the dominion intended for the children of Adam, when the world was made,"¹—that is, inherit the sovereignty described in the first chapter of Genesis,—in a word, have dominion over the beast, and fowls, and fishes ; so that these righteous are freed from the effects of the Fall, as is elsewhere explained, and will begin the world afresh, and be likely again to fall as Adam did. Will you turn again to the whole paragraph whence our text is taken, and see all nations at the bar of God, the sheep and goats eternally separated, and eternally disposed of, and see if there is the shadow of such a theory, or the possibility of ever making such human inventions fit into this divine and majestic scene ! How could Adamic dominion be eternal life ? especially as there is the possibility of another Fall, and according to some the certainty of it.² And how can the judgment day be decisive, if the race is incomplete, and the world just started on a new lease ? It cannot be, and the theory which suggests such solutions of self-made difficulties, is an unholy libel upon the word and veracity of the eternal God. But—

(3) Immediately at the close of the events contingent on Christ's coming, He delivers up the kingdom to the Father, "that God may be all in all." The wonderful passage from which we gather this statement is introduced by the plain and definite words, "THEN COMETH THE END ;" and it goes on to describe the entire subjection of all things to Christ,—the utter and last destruction of death, and of the SON also being subject to the Father, "that God may be all in all." Is there anything less than finality here ? Can there be any change after this ? Has it not only the

(1) "Bloomsbury Lectures," 1843, p. 306.

(2) "Outlines of Prophecy," by James Scott.

appearance, but the most positive proof of being the end? Taking the lowest view of the passage, it certainly conveys to us the idea of the Mediator giving an account of His Stewardship.¹ Then how can any succeeding generations be saved by Him? According to this repugnant notion of endless generations there will be eternal millions who have no personal interest in Christ, nor be under His rule, for they will not be born until He has given up the kingdom! Does this comport with the unanimous voice of inspiration, and with the dignity of our glorious Lord, in Whom are to be gathered together in one all things both which are in heaven and in earth? It does not! and never can be made to harmonize with either. Hence, therefore, we reject it, and turn once more to our old bible, without note or comment, to gather from its intelligible pages the solemn truth concerning that final state to which we all are coming, and in which endless joy, or endless pain, must be our eternal portion.

Dismissing, then, from our minds the inhuman contortions we have been looking at, let us fix our thoughts upon the reality before us.

The final state. How solemn the associations which gather around it! and what weighty considerations it involves! The last sentence past, without the possibility of being revoked, — the last condition reached, without the possibility of a change, — the last companions formed, never to be parted! And who are they? or what are these?

“After the joys of earth,
After its songs of mirth,
After its hours of light,
After its dreams so bright,—
What then?”

Or, to you believers!

“After the Christian’s tears,
After his fights and fears,
After his weary cross,
All things below but loss,—
What then?”

¹) Brown, p. 149.

Let each try to answer these questions according to his present standing before God. To the man out of Christ the sentence must be, "I know you not; depart from Me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." Here, then, we have the condition and companions of the lost. Oh, dear hearer, think of these awful words of our blessed Lord, and think of the dreadful company to which they consign the soul; and I will not ask you, "who among you can dwell with devouring flames?" but, rather, "who among you would like eternally to dwell with unclean spirits?" *Here*, in this life, you have companions who keep holy day, who sing God's praises, and who reflect around you something of the light of heaven; and these often cheer and comfort you, and, by example, give you a little insight into goodness and purity; but *then there* will be nothing of this to shed one ray of light upon your darkness,—nothing but *hatred, rage, uncleanness, and unmixed evil*, for ever and ever. Oh, who can contemplate such fearful society as this without at once fleeing from the wrath to come, or without desiring most fervently to be numbered with the pure and the holy?

But what a blessed end does the final sentence unfold to the Christian man. It introduces him to an inheritance undefiled, and makes him a companion of the redeemed and holy, in a condition of perfect joy, all of which is to endure for ever and ever, where

"No gnawing grief, no sad heart-rending pain,
In that blest country can admission gain;
No sorrow there, no soul-tormenting fear,
For God's own hand shall wipe the falling tear.
Here our Redeemer is all bright and glorious,
O'er sin, and death, and hell, He reigns victorious."

And this is the portion of the children of God, and their inheritance is for ever, which can only harmonise with the orthodox belief, that the judgment day introduces mankind into their final, or unalterable condition; a belief inspired by revelation,—confirmed by all the teachings of Christ,—made known and expatiated upon by the apostles,—received by the true Church of all

ages,—and will still survive all the attacks made upon it, and will be fully justified by and bye in the world without end. Amen.

III.—I remark, the final state of the saved will be one of perfect harmony and concord.

Even that of the wicked will be congruous in itself, for all being enemies to God, there will be consistency in their being together. But we shall not dwell upon that awful scene, but at once turn to the righteous; and I again suppose that we all agree upon the proposition just now submitted, yet a very contrary belief will presently come before us, which will explain the reason for referring to this aspect of the kingdom of glory. The Vicar of Brading,¹ sheltering under the authority of those who had written before him, writes very explicitly on this head, and in order that we might not misunderstand him, the Vicar honestly tells us that he alludes to “a state of things after the general resurrection, and the destroying of the last enemy,”²—that is, as *we* should say, to the final state. “In that state,” the reverend author—making a distinction between the “nations that are saved” and the Bride of Christ—says, “the MASS of men are not to be glorified, they are to be saved,—that is, saved from sin; and as it is revealed there are gradations of reward, and we know there are an infinite number of gradations of works and characters, according to which these stripes and rewards will be given, can we be very wrong in believing that...these nations will fill up with an infinite number of gradations the huge interval between the glorified and the damned?”³ Then, in more detail, the Vicar adds, “If a good living man therefore expects salvation simply by his moral works, he may attain it indeed, perhaps, as he wishes, without Christ’s immediate presence, and among subject nations; but Christ will not peculiarly profit him, he will only share in Christ’s general work of redemption for all mankind.”⁴ So that there is *no*

(1) Author of “The Future Human Kingdom of Christ.” *Vide* “Plain Papers.” by W. Palmer.

(2) *Ib.*, p. 82.

(3) *Ib.*, p. 34-41.

(4) *Ib.* p. 72.

ground for supposing "that all who shall hereafter be saved shall be pleasing to Christ, so as to move Him to love them and permit them to have communion with Him."¹ According to this profane talk many of the saved will *never be glorified*,—indeed, Mr. Dallas argues that SALVATION does not involve glorification²—and some of them are to be so far off as to be within the shortest distance of the lost, where there is weeping and wailing for ever; for the whole distance between glory and eternal misery is to be filled up by circles of saved, but still unglorified men; so that it would appear that the gulf between the saved and lost is much narrowed since our Lord's parable was given, if not, indeed, entirely filled up, making it very possible that the righteous and wicked may after all be able even to hold converse in their eternal homes. We suppose this *being saved* would at least mean "life." But how anyone can get life apart from faith in Christ we are not informed. We know, however, what the Word saith,—“He that believeth not is condemned already.” But “no,” says this Vicar; “if he does not wish to have aught to do with Christ, he may be saved, though not glorified;” hence what a discordant song among the saved, and what dissension there must be there—(the nearest circle of one hundred and forty-four thousand³—according to the system before us—will sing to Christ with apocalyptic praise, “Unto Him that loved us and washed us from our sins in His own blood, to Him be glory and honour and blessing for ever and ever. Amen.”) But the next circle will damp the enthusiasm of this chorus, and the next still more so; and so on until a counter song will be heard in the more distant circles, where moralist and Pharisees who do not love, but literally refuse the Saviour, will sing to their own honour, and glorify their own wisdom and goodness by which they delivered themselves from death. Hence the heaven of these authors is earth over again, with

(1) Author of “The Future Human Kingdom of Christ.” *Vide* “Plain Papers,” by W. Palmer, p. 67.

(2) Dallas' Introduction, paragraph 32, also p. 118.

(3) This is the Vicar's number.

all the contentions of free grace and human merit, which is certainly anything but inviting, especially after the long-entertained doctrines and promises of the written Word. There it is written, "Whom He did foreknow, them He also did predestinate to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the first-born among many brethren. Moreover, whom He did predestinate, them He also called; and whom He called, them He also justified; and whom He JUSTIFIED, them He also GLORIFIED;" which certainly indicates that all that are in the purpose of God will both be conformed to Christ and be glorified by Him, and together will make up the whole family in heaven;

"Who all strike their harps, and one chorus they raise,—
Salvation by grace is their theme;
Thanksgiving, and honour, and blessing, and praise,
And glory to God and the Lamb."

The heaven of pre-millennialism may look well enough to beclouded visions, but to anyone who loves the prospect of the glory which Christ had with the Father before all worlds, and to which He will introduce all the Father hath given Him, it will not do. To such it is nothing but a painful caricature, for it is not the heaven He is gone to prepare, and therefore we reject it with holy disdain, and once more turn to the *revealed descriptions* of the mansions in the skies.

I need not detain you by any lengthened remarks on the locality of heaven, or on the destiny of our globe. A few words will embody all that is necessary to be said here. Peter tells us that he, with others in his day, expected that after the earth had passed through the universal burning, there would be a new heaven and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness. Two or three considerations of this subject will be sufficient to set our minds at rest for the present. And first it is certain that glorified bodies will not need material support, consequently the locality of the redeemed need not be productive of earthly fruits for their subsistence, hence the new earth will be very unlike ours. Secondly, it would be no more inconsistent for this earth to continue after the Curse is removed from it, and all

creation is brought into the glorious liberty of which Paul speaks, than it was for it and other works of creation, such as stars and planets to be in existence before the Curse entered. All God's works will praise Him, and the existence of this globe, after creation's groaning has been done away, may be among the brightest tokens of God's handy-work, and also of His redeeming grace. Associated with this will be more than the Fall and the Curse ; if there was not, it might well be put for ever out of sight ; but here the Deity became incarnate,—here the Brightness of the Father's glory revealed the unmerited love of the Father's heart,—here the great redemption price was paid in tears, and sweat, and blood, and the enemy of God and man overcome,—and here the triumphs of grace in every saved one commence and are perfected. Here, therefore, the greater works of God are memorialized, and, for aught we know, the removing of the Curse from this globe may take away the one discordant note from creation, and lift the whole into the sweetest harmony of its pristine glory, and constitute this long-abused orb one of the brightest palaces, which shall display throughout eternity the wisdom and honour of the Eternal King. And if so, may not its very existence be a means of everlasting praise to the glorified ? Who, of all the redeemed, shall look upon it without remembering the grace and the love which delivered him from the Curse, and brought him to his rest ? Who shall recognise it without admiring afresh the goodness and mercy of our redeeming God ? So that, as inhabitants of the city not made with hands, may we not

“ From the sparkling turrets there,
Often trace our pilgrim way ;
Often bless that guardian care,
Of fire by night, and cloud by day ;
While our triumphs
At our Leader's feet we lay.”

This, I think, is not unlikely, whilst we still hold to the unanimous testimony of scripture, that our inheritance is “laid up for us in *heaven*,” where our interceding Lord is preparing our mansion, and “where

the spirits of the just made perfect" now are, even "the saints in light," whom we hope to join when the earthly house of our tabernacle is dissolved ; for we know that there we have a building, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens.

It is a real relief to turn away from the unrestrained fancies of men, to contemplate the rest that remaineth for the people of God, though we cannot do more at present than glance at a few features of that glory which gathers around the central fact, that **THE FINAL STATE OF THE RIGHTEOUS WILL BE ONE WITH CHRIST.** Amid the suffering here, the great apostle had a desire to depart that he might be with Him which was far better ; and our Lord Himself, in His last prayer with His sorrowful disciples, prayed that they and all whom the Father had given Him may be with Him, to behold His glory which He had with the Father before the foundation of the world ; so that we are safe in concluding that our heaven will be in His presence, where there is fulness of joy, and at whose right hand there are pleasures for evermore. This one thought is enough to fire our every passion, and to fill us with the most ardent longings to be there. He once came down to be with us,—with us in suffering,—with us in nature,—with us in our weakness,—and with us in our poverty and want,—but, above all, with us in our curse ; yea, with us, that He might take our infirmities, bear our sorrows, and deliver us from death, and finally bring us to be WITH HIM. His presence, when here, stilled the tempest and allayed the billows of the sea, it scattered death and devils, and brought comfort and joy to the stricken and sad ; it turned Tabor into a holy mount, and the hill-slopes of Galilee into Temples for God ; it dried the tears of many that wept, and chased the doubts of His trembling few,—all this, and much more, when He was here. But what will it be there with Him, where darkness can never enter, because God and the Lamb are the light of the place ? —with Him ! where sorrow and sighing flee away, for all who walk there are saved and forgiven ; —with Him ! where sin and Satan can never annoy, for

through the pearly gates they cannot pass;—with Him! where strife and contention can never disturb, for pride and self are left behind;—with Him! where darkness is made light, and hidden things revealed, for

“Mysteries there are all explained,
And not one doubt remains.”

And *ever* with Him, no more to be exposed to the cross and the shame of a sneering world,—no more to be tried and crushed with temporal care and woe,—no more to be wounded and pierced with the thorns of reproach and contempt,—no more to weep over personal sins, nor to grieve over sins in others,—no more to carry the burden of the earthly Church, nor to sigh for the perfectness of the Church above,—*no more!* for the cross laid down at the portals will be exchanged for the crown, and the soft hand of the King will wipe the last tear, and the Lamb in the midst will lead His followers to the fountains of living waters. But more still! *With Him,—ever with Him,* and with all *those that are His*; for at His coming we shall gather together to Him. What a meeting!

“With patriarchs, prophets, apostles, and those
Who sealed the truth with their blood;
Whose unsubdued courage astonished their foes,
And forced them to glorify God.”

And with those also we have known in the flesh. We have seen them here,—some in deep waters, some in fiery trials,—some in tears, some in gladness,—some striving to climb up Zion’s hill, some lagging behind,—some undeviating in their Christian course, some uncertain in their devious way,—some with living zeal bound with strong cords to God’s altar, some with selfishness and reserve shunning the cross; but everyone who loves Christ will be there, and we shall gather together with all that are His. The carnal and the worldly will suffer loss in the fire, and the faithful and devoted have an abundant entrance into His heavenly kingdom; but still—*all there*; and we shall gather together to Him. And the shy looks and the envious hearts will be missing, and the errors and wrongs

be wanting ; the systems of men will have vanished, and the theories of a vain imagination be exploded ; the creature will be nothing, the Creator and Redeemer be all ; and every face will reflect His image, for we shall be like Him, and every tongue resound His praise,—the feeble will be as David, and David as the angel of God. This, dear hearer, is the heaven of the bible, and the heaven to which we are looking,—the heaven that has cheered untold thousands along their pilgrim-way, and the heaven in which the dead in Christ are now resting,—the heaven which Jesus is gone to prepare, and the heaven to which He will bring all those who look for Him, when He shall come the second time without sin unto salvation. Therefore, let no one rob you of the hope of this bright inheritance, where awaiteth the crown of life which is laid up on high for you who love His appearing ; nor be ye content with any representation which deprives that inheritance of its perfection and glory in the presence of God and the Lamb : but rather “stand and rejoice in the hope of that glory,” knowing, as you do, that nothing less than this can answer your Lord’s prayer, or satisfy the longings His grace has inspired. Still, after all, we know but little comparatively of the glory which shall then be revealed in us, nor of the perfect felicity which we then shall share. But this we know,—

“There is a heaven of perfect peace,
The eternal throne is there ;
But what that tearless region is,
It doth not yet appear.

And there are ransomed spirits too,
Who once were pilgrims here ;
But how the Saviour’s face they view,
It doth not yet appear.

Then, O my soul, with patience wait,
The happy hour is near,
When thou wilt pass the pearly gate,
Where it will all appear.”





LECTURE VIII.

THE CONCLUSION.

Delivered Lord's Day, February 4th, 1872.

“Occupy till I come.” Luke xix., 13.

AS my purpose this evening is to make a practical use of the truths we have arrived at in the previous lectures, it will not be expected that I shall take up the time by giving an exposition of the parable whence our text is taken, further than to shew its general bearing upon the Christian Church. At the time these words were spoken, the Jews that followed Christ were expecting that He would immediately, on His reaching Jerusalem, assume His regal authority, set up for Himself a temporal kingdom, and deliver His nation from the Roman yoke. To correct this error,—as we learn from the eleventh verse,—our Lord spake this parable, in which He shows His disciples how greatly they had been mistaken respecting His motives and intentions. It was true that He was the Messiah-King, but the nature of His kingdom was far from the ideal kingdom which floated in their minds. He was not about to rally any military forces, nor to establish an earthly throne with its princely pomp and grandeur, either then or at any subsequent period; but was, in fact, going away to a far country, where He should

receive His investiture, and exercise "His universal authority, though in a spiritual and invisible manner, for all power in heaven and in earth would be in His hands. At length, however, He should return in His own glory, and in that of His Father, and of the holy angels; when He should award every man according to his works, and "inaugurate, in presence of the assembled universe, an eternal and glorious kingdom."¹ In the meantime a solemn and holy trust would be in the hands of His servants, and their zeal and fidelity be proved; and then on His return,—to receive back the trust committed to them,—He would award to each his proper measure of praise or punishment as his case deserved.

The command which embodies all this is found in the words "occupy till I come," and was no doubt intended as much for the whole Church, from the day of Ascension to the final coming of the Lord, as for the faithful few who really received the commission at the parting over against Bethany; and, therefore, is binding upon us of this age, and to it we ought to give the most earnest heed. It is not for us to busy ourselves so much about the time of the Saviour's return, as it is to *know and do* what He has bidden us to accomplish in His absence. We have the gospel, as a solemn trust, put into our hands; it is—using the figure of the parable—our Lord's money, for which we shall have to give an account; and if faithfully applied, we shall then be ready to meet Him with joy, whensoever He comes.

We could scarcely alight on a passage more practical and impressive, in connection with our present study, than the one before us; and I am very anxious that no false views should turn us away from the zeal and fidelity it demands. Hundreds of pious people at the present day seem to labour for nothing else than to get Christians simply to *wait* for the Lord's coming, and these persons can even sneer at the zeal and energy of those who are striving to use the Lord's money as He has commanded, as though nothing

more was to be done than to "gaze up into heaven," (as did the disciples, till censured by the two men in white apparel.) Does the parable before us inculcate any such spirit of pious indolence and want of faith in the Lord's mission? It does not, but just the reverse. It calls upon the servants to labour with the most fervent zeal during the time they hold this sacred gospel trust, that they might bring the largest amount possible of revenue to the divine Master. How do pre-millennarians attempt this? As a rule, they disbelieve the designs of the Master in His commission, and use all the influence in their power to teach others to lose heart in the Church's efforts to convert the world to God. A more subtle and fallacious passage to this effect could scarcely be found than the following. The writer proposes the question, "What is the Church's place?" and then answers it in his own way, thus :—

"How the Holy Ghost provides an answer to this question, in the yearnings of the heart of the apostle over the saints at Corinth.....For I am jealous over you with godly jealousy ; for I have espoused you to one husband that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ. 2 Cor. xi., 2. Could any language more touchingly express the deep, devoted, single-hearted affection for Christ, and weanedness from all else, which constitute the only fitting response to the love wherewith He has loved the Church in espousing her thus to Himself? Ought even a converted world, if He were not personally present in it, to satisfy one who is thus espoused as a chaste virgin to Christ? How do the laborious efforts even of sincere, devoted Christians, to shew that what is before us, is a spiritual millennium, without Christ's personal presence, make manifest the condition into which the Church has sunk.....See the effect of this our departure in heart from the true scriptural hope of the Church as the spouse or bride of Christ. Adopting for our object, as the Church at large has done, the rectification of the world in the absence of *its* rightful ruler, and *our* Lord and Bridegroom, we naturally avail ourselves of all the means and influences within reach to bear upon our object ; and hence the strange, the anomalous sight of the professed bride of an earth-rejected Lord, possessing, using, and seeking still further to possess and use the appliances of worldly rank and authority and wealth and learning and popular influence, to hasten on, as is affirmed, the epoch of the world's

regeneration. The Church forgets her own calling, to wait as a desolate, widowed stranger in the world whence her Lord has been rejected, and where He is still dishonoured.....She proposes indeed to convert the world ; but it is the world that has converted her.”¹

When I read this page, twelve or fourteen years ago, I wrote thus on the margin : “ the sentiment here is little less than blasphemy.” The language was, perhaps, almost too strong ; but after all I have read and seen of the effect of such sentiments from that time till now, I am not prepared to strike my pen through it. With all gravity I ask, Is this the Church’s place ? Is she to wait as a desolate, widowed stranger in the world ? Is this her calling ? Did the inspired apostles so understand it ? If so, why did they not wait in Jerusalem, and never attempt to do the work which this modern teacher sneeringly calls the “ rectification of the world ? ” Or, why did Paul subject himself to all the hardships which he suffered to make the gospel of Christ known in the regions of darkness ? Would it not have been much easier for him to have done, as is too often done now by a certain class of professed Christians, who gather a few pious souls together, and talk of the Lord’s coming, and wait as “ widowed strangers, in patient suffering grace towards the world ? ”¹ Why should he care to see that the Word of God was sounded out into all the world ? He and his brother apostle (if the above paragraph is true) might have had an easy time of it, luxuriating in all the rich things of God revealed to them, and saving themselves from all the persecution of the Jews and heathens, and so have left Asia and Europe alone, not proposing to convert either ; and then we in Britain might have been revelling to-day in the savage dance of the Druids, and the writer above quoted would have been spared the pain of seeing the Church going out of her way to bring the heathen to Christ ; nor would he have heard the thousands of English Sunday Scholars sing as they now do,—

(1) Plain Paper, pp. 114, 115.

(2) Plain Paper, p. 118.

"I thank the goodness and the grace
Which on my birth have smiled ;"

as he among the rest, if born at all, would have been

"———born, as thousands are,
Where God was never known."

Now, if heathenism would not have been good for the author of "Plain Papers," it certainly is not good for anyone else ; and if the Master's command justified certain Christians in seeking the conversion of this island, the same command binds the Church of Christ to-day to seek the conversion of the heathen to God, whatever may be their colour or tribe. To some minds the sentiments of this class of writers are nothing better than selfish indolence, and sentimental twaddle, calculated to deceive the ignorant, and to bring the glorious mission of the Church into strong contempt. Does the parable, whence our text is taken, encourage any desolate waiting?—any inactivity? Does "occupy till I come" look like this? Does the activity, which was so richly rewarded in the faithful servants, look like it? The only likeness I can see in the parable to this state of things, is in the wicked servant who laid up the Lord's money in a napkin, whom the Church will resemble when she gives up her mission to "teach all nations." But is it true that the Church is a "waiting widow"? There was a time when she appeared so, but it was only for ten days,—the period between the Ascension and the Pentecost. She then waited with fervent prayer and supplication ; but no sooner did the Spirit come with His rushing, mighty power, than she gave up the *waiting for work*, and work is still her mission, and will be

"Till each remotest nation
Has learn'd Messiah's name."

Nor is there any anomaly in "seeking still further to possess and use wealth, learning and influence, to hasten on the world's regeneration." These, indeed, are what we are to expect as consecrated gifts to the Church ; for even kings shall "bring presents," and "offer gifts" ; nor shall the "gold of Sheba" be missing

to further her cause. Is either wealth, learning, or influence an unacceptable sacrifice when laid upon the Redeemer's altar ; or is the Church wrong in seeking to get men to devote their highest and best talents to the cause of Christ ? Pre-millenarians do not forget to serve their *own* interest by these gifts and advantages ; and is their advancement in position, or their wealth, so precious in the sight of our Lord, that all this is legitimate for them to seek after ; whilst for the Church to seek for the same, to advance the honor of Christ, is a sign of her degeneracy ? Rather did we not ought to seek for the grace which shall lay every gift of God under tribute to the glory of Jesus ? This, at least, is the spirit inculcated by the constraining love of Christ ; and is what all right-minded Christians will ever seek for their Lord. Is it true that the activity of the Church in modern years, to convert the heathen, and to bring about a spiritual millennium, makes "manifest the condition to which the Church has sunk ?" Taking the legitimate teaching of the above paragraph, one would think so. To most Christians these efforts to make the Redeemer known throughout the world carry with them the signs of an awakening to Christian obligation and heaven-directed service ; for we totally deny that the Church ever *made* the proposition to convert the world,—that proposition was made by our all-loving and glorious Lord ; and if there is a mistake in it, it is a pity that the above writer had not been present on Olivet, and pointed it out to Him, Whom the Divine Father wishes us ever to obey ; as it is certain He there gave the command, "Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature," and all nations were commanded by Him to be discipled. When, then, does the Church sink into a condition to be deplored ? When she misinterprets the Divine command, and waits with folded arms ? Or when she goes, as did the primitive disciples, "turning the world upside down" ; or, as one has said, turning it right side upwards ? The answer is obvious.

After all this, *we* venture to ask the same question,— "What is the Church's place?" and we answer, It is one

of earnest activity, extending over the whole length of years between the two great Advents ; and she has for this period the gospel of Christ to preach, and the laws and ordinances of Christ to proclaim and administer in the world ; nor till He comes must she expect to resign labour for rest, or service for reward ; for she is to occupy till then. This absence, then, is the time of the world's probation, and the Church's struggles and victories ; and how much she has to cheer and animate her in her work, as she looks backward to Bethlehem and the Cross, and onward to the coming and glory, in both of which she sees her Saviour and Lord. For a description of His person and character she ponders the Incarnation and Life, the miracles and transfiguration, the death and resurrection, the appearances and "taking up into glory," and she is ravished with the sight ; for her pardon and cleansing, too, she looks back to the Open Fountain and the dark Gethsemane ; and for her law and obligation she also looks back to the commands and teachings of her King and His inspired apostles. Having looked here, she then turns to the future, and there she sees the glory, the reward, the ultimate triumph, and the crown ; and between these wonderful Advents, and with these advantages, she can afford to labour, suffer, and wait,—not as a desolate weeper, but as a loving, active, cheerful, hopeful servant, doing her Lord's commands, and expecting her Lord's reward. Is the Church conscious of her weakness to accomplish her task ? She looks back to the promise of the Holy Ghost, and to its fulfilment on Pentecost ; and thence is assured of His power and grace to be with her throughout her state of warfare, so long as she is faithful to her high trust, and zealous in her sacred mission. Or does she want a glimpse at the result of all her labours ? She looks to the time, when the earth shall own her rightful Lord, when all the nations shall be blessed in Him, and His name honoured and praised through her ministrations among men. And these reflections of light from the past and the future, are far from fostering a spirit of morbid indifference to the world's

claims, or of disobedience and despondency respecting her work. Is it not an injustice and an insult to represent the Church—thus surrounded with grace—as a desolate widow? and is it not a dishonour to Christ so to speak of His spouse? Is He not LIVING and REIGNING for her as the “Head over all things to the Church”? and has He not addressed words of counsel and love to her, “that His joy might remain in her, and that her joy might be full?” And has she not the faithful promise, “Lo I am with you always, even unto the end of the world?” In what sense, then, is she a widow? and what cause, concerning her Maker, who is her LIVING Husband, has she to repine in sorrow? To talk of the true Church of Christ, as being content, either now, or in a spiritual millennium, without the personal presence of her Lord, is to practice a kind of pious fraud upon the minds of simple Christians, and to misrepresent the piety of the faithful in Christ Jesus. Are post-millenarians so carnal and indifferent about their Lord as to want a millennium without Him? Were Paul and Peter, James and John, carnally minded? They certainly did not expect any visible presence of Christ with them in their work; yet, were they alone? Were they in a widowhood state? To hear Paul, as he tells of living in Christ, and of Christ living in him, of sitting with Him in the heavenly places, and of doing all things through Christ, seems far from this; and to hear John speak of his fellowship with the Father and with His Son Jesus Christ, and of the perfect love which casteth out fear, does not sound like the language of desolation. The fact is, the Church is not desolate; she is not left comfortless; her Lord is faithful to her; and only when she forsakes Him, and grieves His Holy Spirit, need she put on her mourning attire, or sit down in dust and ashes.

“What, then,” we again ask, “is the Church’s place?” Our answer is simple and definite. It is one of active-service and obedience to Christ. He gave to the eleven the word of command, and it has never been revoked; nor will it be, till the world is full of the knowledge of the Lord, and the kingdom of heaven

has extended to the four quarters of the globe. The difficulties may be great, but the arm of the Lord is greater ; nor shall He be discouraged, till He has set righteousness in the earth. If there was room for discouragement, it was when the commission was first given. What a scene must this world have presented to the ascending Redeemer's eye ; yet, even then, He was not discouraged. There was the Jewish nation in sworn rebellion against Him and His gospel ; there was Greece, with all its boasted wisdom and philosophy, enslaved in the most debasing bonds of vice and iniquity ; there was Rome glorying in her military grandeur, and fettered in chains of heathen filthiness ; there were Egypt, Arabia, India, and the Isles of the Sea all in darkness and the shadow of death ; and to roll back the tide of unrighteousness, and to establish truth in the earth, Christ had before Him a few poor unpolished fishermen. Yet He was not discouraged, but bade them arise and go forth, for His Spirit through them should convince the world of sin and righteousness and judgment to come. Down the ages that same Omniscieny looked, and saw all the struggles which His followers should encounter with heathen, papal, and other forms of cruelty and superstition ; yet He was not discouraged, but gave them His word and promise, bidding them to be of good cheer, for they should overcome the world ; and

“ Thus armed, He sent His champions forth,
From east to west, from south to north :
Go, and assert your Saviour's cause !
Go, spread the mysteries of His cross ! ”

And in obedience thereto, they went forth, and the Lord was with them, confirming their word with signs following. Thus they believed the Lord, and so they prospered. And in this same manner we have to follow up the work so gloriously begun, and though a thousand difficulties are yet in the way, the conquest is certain, for greater is He that is for us than all that can be against us. And as we have seen in these lectures, the prospect of conquest has never been brighter

than to-day, the agencies have never been so numerous, nor the way ever so well prepared as now; we only need the Spirit of Grace to be copiously poured out, and the harvest shall be reaped for the Lord. The days of the papacy are coming to a close, and the first resurrection—the living again of the true Spirit of devotion to Christ, and the coming forth of the long-crushed Church, in full vigor—shall soon be seen; and the flying angel with the everlasting gospel shall spread his wings over every land, and the “millennial glory” will dawn, and the days of heaven on earth be realised, “and all the world shall see the salvation of our God, for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.” Then truth shall spring out of the earth, and righteousness shall look down from heaven, and the Redeemer will see of the travail of His soul, and the long-desired age of peace be enjoyed. For this, let the hopeful Christian work and pray; then if he lives not to see his wishes realized here, he will have the satisfaction in another world of knowing that he laboured not in vain; for though he rests from his toil his works will follow him. And then when the final assize shall come, and every son of Adam be summoned to the bar of God, and the great ends of time be answered, and the race brought to a final close, this obedient disciple shall hear the “Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord,” whilst the visionary superstructures of pre-millennial hands will vanish as a dream before the light of that most glorious appearing of the great God and our Saviour Jesus Christ.

EVEN SO, COME, LORD JESUS!







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